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SELECTIONS FROM KEATS



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TORONTO



JOHN KEATS

After the painting by Joseph Severn

Selections from Keats

Edited with Introduction and Notes by

Bernard Groom, M.A.

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INTRODUCTION

'I THINK I shall be among the English poets after my death.' These words of Keats are quoted by Matthew Arnold, who adds, 'he is, he is with Shakespeare.' Keats thought modestly of his own poems, but some of them are among the most wonderful ever written. Time is necessary to ripen those qualities of mind and soul which are required for the most arduous achievements in poetry, and Keats died when he was twenty-five. He was too young for the sustained flight of the epic, and his attempts at drama are failures. But in certain forms of poetry his triumph was complete. The volume of 1820 contains some of the crowning achievements of poetic art. To have written the Odes alone would have given him a title to undying remembrance.

The career of Keats illustrates the incalculable nature of genius. The circumstances of his birth and childhood seemed unpromising. He was born in 1795, at Finsbury, London, his father being the head ostler in a livery stable. The family was not without ambitions, but it had no sort of literary or artistic tradition. John, the eldest of four children, was educated at the school of a Mr. Clarke, at Enfield. Before he was sixteen he left to be apprenticed to a surgeon; but he had already received the beginnings of a very fair education. He had learned to love reading, could enjoy Virgil, and took great delight in Greek mythology. At school he translated a large part of the *Æneid* into English, and shortly after leaving finished the entire epic. In character he was enthusiastic, full

of strong feelings and warm affections. He was small in stature—his full height was barely an inch above five feet—but he was brave and sturdy, and in an age of general pugilism was by no means reluctant to use his fists. His features were beautiful, and the ardour of his nature was visible in his expression. At school he made a valuable friend in Charles Cowden Clarke, son of the head-master, and the friendship was maintained after Keats's hospital studies had begun. At the end of his day's work Keats would often walk the two miles to his old school, and borrow books from his friend, who was an enthusiast for many kinds of literature. One day the book lent was *The Faerie Queene*: and from that date Keats's poetic career must be reckoned. So many writers have been awakened to a consciousness of their powers by Spenser that he has been called 'the poets' poet.' To Keats *The Faerie Queene* was a revelation. Not only the adventures and visions, but the music of the stanza, and above all the imagery and epithets, gave him uncontrollable delight. With true poetic instinct he seized upon the vivid and picturesque expressions in which Spenser's language abounds, such as 'sea-shouldering whales.' His mind was also opening to the beauty of natural scenery. The villages of Enfield and Edmonton had not yet been absorbed by Greater London, and were full of rural charm. Keats needed no more than the ordinary unspoilt country-side to stir him to rapture. 'Certain things affected him extremely,' said his friend Severn, 'particularly when "a wave was billowing through a tree," as he described the uplifting surge of air among swaying masses of chestnut or oak foliage, or when, afar off, he heard the wind coming across woodlands. "The tide! the tide!" he would cry delightedly, and spring on to some stile, or upon the low bough of a wayside tree, and watch the passage of the wind upon the meadow grasses or young corn, not stirring till the flow of air was all round him, while an expression of rapture made his eyes gleam and his face glow.' These new delights were growing into a passion.

Keats's heart had never been given wholly to his medical studies; sometimes he dreamed of abandoning them and launching out into the dangerous but exciting career of letters. He became attached to a literary circle of which James Henry Leigh Hunt, a fluent poet and gifted essayist, then living at Hampstead, was the leading spirit. Keats began to write a few poems—sonnets, descriptive lines, verse letters, and the like—which by degrees became known to his friends. The reception which his attempts received was highly encouraging, and induced Keats to venture upon publication. In 1817 the volume appeared, a very small one, and called simply *Poems*. One can easily understand that any readers the book may have had—and they were not many—would have been more impressed by the soft luxurious manner for which Leigh Hunt stood than the scattered signs of imagination and power which were Keats's own. The decisive step, however, had been taken, and Keats had no thought of turning back. A legacy inherited from his grandmother would support him for some time; so he left the hospital and plunged into the anxious liberty of literary life.

It was characteristic of Keats that he should at once begin upon a long narrative poem of many hundreds of lines. The subject of this ambitious work was the story of the moon-goddess Cynthia's love for Endymion, a shepherd of Latmos. Keats had long been fascinated by the theme. In his hands the story becomes a kind of allegory. Endymion's love for Cynthia shadows forth the poet's quest of ideal Beauty. The thread of symbolism is by no means easy to follow; and, indeed, the whole poem, as Keats admits, is 'a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished.' The narrative is ever slipping out of the writer's grasp; while the verse, weakly controlled, meanders through luxurious mazes. But there are splendid passages, such as the 'Hymn to Pan' (Book I.) and the 'Song of the Indian Maiden' (Book IV.). Here and there, too, Keats attains that rounded perfection of phrase

which marks his mature manner, as in the famous and characteristic first line :

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever ;

and occasionally he shows that power of concentrated description in which he has no superior, as in the lines :

Old Ocean rolls a lengthened wave to the shore
Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,
Bursts gradual with a wayward indolence.

As soon as the long and excessive strain of writing *Endymion* was over, Keats, with an imagination somewhat chastened, but much enriched by experience, turned to new tasks. In a short time he had finished *Isabella, or The Pot of Basil*. This work reveals the true poet. It contains passages of exquisite beauty ; and the whole poem is one of inexpressible charm. It is not faultless. There are many marks of immaturity ; the ending is weak ; and, as in *Endymion*, there are touches of bad taste. But the tremulous love of Lorenzo for Isabella ; the contrast between their gay parting in the early dawn and the two brothers' grim purpose ; the description of Isabella with her aged nurse at the grave—such things cast a spell over the reader which no familiarity can stale. Soon after *Isabella* was finished Keats set out on a long walking-tour in the North with his friend Charles Brown. The visit to Cumberland, to the home of Burns and to the Western Isles, gave the friends unbounded delight ; but the holiday had tragic consequences. The fatigue of the tour and the severity of the out-of-door life were too great for the young town-bred poet. He had inherited a tendency to consumption ; and a cold caught in the Isle of Mull brought on a bad sore throat—the earliest symptom of fatal disease. Soon after the return to London savage reviews of *Endymion* appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* and *The Quarterly Review* ; and though it is absurd to say, as Byron does, that Keats was

killed 'by an article,' the brutality of the reviewers certainly added bitterness to other sufferings. About the same time the poet became acquainted with Miss Fanny Brawne, a young lady living in Hampstead, with whom he soon fell violently in love. The intensity of a passion which was soon to turn into hopelessness makes the story of Keats's love one of great sadness.

The *annus mirabilis* of Keats's life was 1819. He was living principally in the South of England, now at Chichester, now in the Isle of Wight, now at Winchester, with occasional visits to London. In the winter of 1818 he began *Hyperion*, a poem which dares to challenge comparison with *Paradise Lost*. Only two books and part of a third were written; and it is evident that Keats had begun a task which was too big for him. But there are many passages and descriptions in *Hyperion* which show the poet at his very best; and what higher praise can be given? January, 1819, saw the completion of *The Eve of St. Agnes*, a poem in which descriptive beauty reaches the utmost height that imagination can conceive. And in the early spring Keats began that succession of Odes, of which the three finest are simply poetry in essence—the perfect embodiment of the poetic spirit. In the previous year he had written the *Fragment of an Ode to Maia*; and in the April of 1819 he produced the first of his complete odes, *To Psyche*. The *Ode to a Nightingale*, which breathes the spirit of the Spring, was composed in a Hampstead garden in May; and it was followed in September by the *Ode to Autumn*. The *Ode on a Grecian Urn* belongs to the following January. Even this list does not complete the achievements of this wonderful year. The most mysterious and haunting of his works, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, was finished in May, 1819, and in July he was writing the third of his narrative poems, *Lamia*. The story is of a serpent which, under the form of a woman, beguiles a young Corinthian, named Lycius, into marriage. In the midst of the wedding-

feast the cold glance of the philosopher, Apollonius, penetrates the disguise and shrivels up the woman's fair form, leaving the bridegroom dead with horror. *Lamia* is less perfect than *The Eve of St. Agnes*; yet it is a brilliant piece of work; and there are parts of it, such as the description of the banquet, which even Keats never excelled. In the same year *Otho the Great*, a drama, was finished. Though this work is not to be compared with its author's masterpieces it is interesting to read, for it is quite probable that if Keats had lived he would have become a great dramatic poet.

As an author Keats had now nearly reached the end of his career. The last year of his life was a painful struggle for health, and his ebbing strength was unequal to the intense strain of poetic composition. In the February of 1820 he had imprudently gone out into the chilly night air without an overcoat, and returned home with a hectic flush on his cheek. Shortly after he was attacked by a spasm of violent coughing, and spat up blood. His medical knowledge was sufficient to diagnose his own case: he knew that he must die. Keats's friend Brown who was with him at the time tells us of the calmness with which the poet faced the truth. As the spring months came round there was a temporary return of hope and happiness, and Keats even wrote the fragment of a drama, *The Cap and Bells*. In July appeared the great volume of 1820, with this announcement on the title-page: '*Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Other Poems, by John Keats, Author of Endymion.*' It is one of the most precious books in literature, its contents splendidly fulfilling the author's own wish to 'load every rift with ore.' Yet to Keats in his bitterness life seemed to have been snatched away before one stone for the foundations of his poetic fame had been laid. There was indeed no hope of life. Miss Bawne and her mother did what they could for him; but towards the end of the summer it became clear that he could not survive another winter in England. He set sail for Italy in September,

accompanied by one of the most devoted friends a man ever had, Joseph Severn. The poet's fancy and natural brightness never wholly forsook him, but the consumption was irresistible, and he died at Rome in February, 1821. He was buried in the Protestant Cemetery, near the tomb of Caius Cestius, the 'one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,' described in *Adonais*. The epitaph was chosen by Keats himself, in a moment of bitter despair: 'Here lies one whose name was writ in water.'

Keats was not one of those writers who impose autobiography on their readers. In an age when poetry was often too subjective and egotistical, he showed that reserve of the artist who lives chiefly in his creations. Anyone, he felt, was a fitter theme for poetry than the poet himself. To his friends, however, Keats laid bare his deepest thoughts with an almost startling intimacy. His *Letters* are among the most interesting ever written by a poet. They reveal a mind resolved to face fearlessly the problems of human destiny, and to shape its own interpretation of life. One sees in them how well-founded was Keats's ambition to produce, in time, 'a few fine plays.' The *Letters* contain many memorable passages: but few give us a more poignant sense of regret for the poet's early death than the following criticism of Wordsworth's *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*:

'I compare human life to a large Mansion of many apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first we step into we call the Infant, or Thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think. We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the Second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us—we no sooner get into the Second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-

Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight. However, among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man—of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness, and oppression—whereby this Chamber of Maiden-Thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil ; we are in a mist, *we* are now in that state, we feel the ' Burden of the Mystery.' To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive, when he wrote *Tintern Abbey*, and it seems to me that his genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them.'

In another way than he supposed Keats was destined to explore the dark passages of our existence. Death denied him the chance of writing those ' few fine plays ' of which he had dreamed ; but, early as it came, it could not destroy his right to live among the English poets, ' with Shakespeare,' as Arnold said, and to be remembered—in the words of a later critic—as ' one of the bravest and wisest and most beautiful spirits this England has been privileged to engender.'

FROM *ENDYMION* 1897. 4

I

A THING OF BEAUTY IS A JOY FOR EVER'

A THING of beauty is a joy for ever :
 Its loveliness increases ; it will never
 Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways 10
 Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Trees old, and young, sprouting a shady boon
 For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
 With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season ; the mid forest brake, the huckleberry,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms :
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms 20
 We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read :

An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour ; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light 30
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They always must be with us, or we die.

II

~ HYMN TO PAN

O THOU, whose mighty palace roof doth hang
From jagged trunks, and overshadoweth
Eternal whispers, glooms, the birth, life, death
Of unseen flowers in heavy peacefulness ;
Who lov'st to see the hamadryads dress
Their ruffled locks where meeting hazels darken ;
And through whole solemn hours dost sit, and hearken
The dreary melody of bedded reeds—
In desolate places, where dank moisture breeds
The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth ; 10
Bethinking thee, how melancholy loth
Thou wast to lose fair Syrinx—do thou now,
By thy love's milky brow !
By all the trembling mazes that she ran,
Hear us, great Pan !

O thou, for whose soul-soothing quiet, turtles
Passion their voices cooingly 'mong myrtles,
What time thou wanderest at eventide
Through sunny meadows, that outskirt the side
Of thine enmossed realms : O thou, to whom 20
Broad leaved fig trees even now foredoom
Their ripen'd fruitage ; yellow girted bees
Their golden honeycombs ; our village leas
Their fairest-blossom'd beans and popped corn ;
The chuckling linnet its five young unborn,
To sing for thee ; low-creeping strawberries
Their summer coolness ; pent-up butterflies
Their freckled wings ; yea, the fresh budding year
All its completions—be quickly near,
By every wind that nods the mountain pine, 30
O forester divine !

Thou, to whom every faun and satyr flies
For willing service ; whether to surprise
The squatted hare while in half sleeping fit ;
Or upward ragged precipices flit
To save poor lambkins from the eagle's maw ;
Or by mysterious enticement draw
Bewildered shepherds to their path again ;
Or to tread breathless round the frothy main,
And gather up all fancifullest shells 40
For thee to tumble into Naiads' cells,
And, being hidden, laugh at their out-peeping ;
Or to delight thee with fantastic leaping,
The while they pelt each other on the crown
With silvery oak apples, and fir cones brown—
By all the echoes that about thee ring,
Hear us, O satyr king !

O Harkener to the loud clapping shears
 While ever and anon to his shorn peers
 A ram goes bleating : Winder of the horn, 50
 When snouted wild-boars routing tender corn
 Anger our huntsmen : Breather round our farms,
 To keep off mildews, and all weather harms :
 Strange ministrant of undescribed sounds, &
 That come a-swooning over hollow grounds,
 And wither drearily on barren moors :
 Dread opener of the mysterious doors
 Leading to universal knowledge—see,
 Great son of Dryope,
 The many that are come to pay their vows 60
 With leaves about their brows !

Be still the unimaginable lodge
 For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
 Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,
 That spreading in this dull and clodded earth
 Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth :
 Be still a symbol of immensity ;
 A firmament reflected in a sea ;
 An element filling the space between ; 70
 An unknown—but no more : we humbly screen
 With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending,
 And giving out a shout most heaven rending,
 Conjure thee to receive our humble Pæan,
 Upon thy Mount Lycean !

III

FROM THE SONG OF THE INDIAN MAIDEN

BENEATH my palm trees, by the river side,
I sat a weeping : in the whole world wide
There was no one to ask me why I wept,—
 And so I kept
Brimming the water-lily cups with tears '
 Cold as my fears.

Beneath my palm trees, by the river side,
I sat a weeping : what enamour'd bride,
Cheated by shadowy wooer from the clouds,
 But hides and shrouds 10
Beneath dark palm trees by a river side ?

And as I sat, over the light blue hills
There came a noise of revellers : the rills
Into the wide stream came of purple hue—
 'Twas Bacchus and his crew !
The earnest trumpet spake, and silver thrills
From kissing cymbals made a merry din—
 'Twas Bacchus and his kin !
Like to a moving vintage down they came,
Crown'd with green leaves, and faces all on flame ; 20
All madly dancing through the pleasant valley,
 To scare thee, Melancholy !
O then, O then, thou wast a simple name !
And I forget thee, as the berried holly
By shepherds is forgotten, when, in June,
Tall chestnuts keep away the sun and moon :—
 I rush'd into the folly !

Over wide streams and mountains great we went,
And, save when Bacchus kept his ivy tent,
• Onward the tiger and the leopard pants, 60
 With Asian elephants :
Onward these myriads—with song and dance,
With zebras striped, and sleek Arabians' prance,
Web-footed alligators, crocodiles,
Bearing upon their scaly backs, in files,
Plump infant laughers mimicking the coil
Of seamen, and stout galley-rowers' toil :
With toying oars and silken sails they glide,
 Nor care for wind and tide.
Mounted on panthers' furs and lions' manes, 70
From rear to van they scour about the plains ;
A three days' journey in a moment done :
And always, at the rising of the sun,
About the wilds they hunt with spear and horn,
 On spleenful unicorn.

I saw Osirian Egypt kneel adown
 Before the vine-wreath crown !
I saw parch'd Abyssinia rouse and sing
 To the silver cymbals' ring !
I saw the whelming vintage hotly pierce 80
 Old Tartary the fierce !
The kings of Inde their jewel-sceptres vail, *hail*
And from their treasures scatter pearled hail ;
'Great Brahma from his mystic heaven groans,
 • And all his priesthood moans ;
Before young Bacchus' eye-wink turning pale.—
Into these regions came I following him,
Sick hearted, weary—so I took a whim

To stray away into these forests drear
 Alone, without a peer :
 And I have told thee all thou mayest hear.

90

SONNETS

I

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

MUCH have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
 And many goodly states and kingdoms seen ;
 Round many western islands have I been
 Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
 Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
 That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne ;
 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
 Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold :
 Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
 When a new planet swims into his ken ;
 Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
 He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
 Look'd at each other with a wild surmise--
 Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

10

II

WHEN I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high-piled books, in charactery,
 Hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain ;

When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance ;
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting love ;—then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

10

III

*Written on a blank page in Shakespeare's Poems, facing
 'A Lover's Complaint.'*

BRIGHT star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike task
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
 Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
 No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
 And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

10

FANCY

EVER let the fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home :
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth ;
 Then let winged Fancy wander
 Through the thought still spread beyond her :
 Open wide the mind's cage-door,
 She'll dart forth, and cloudward soar.
 O sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Summer's joys are spoilt by use, 10
 And the enjoying of the Spring
 Fades as does its blossoming ;
 Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too,
 Blushing through the mist and dew,
 Cloys with tasting : What do then ?
 Sit thee by the ingle, when
 The sear faggot blazes bright,
 Spirit of a winter's night ;
 When the soundless earth is muffled,
 And the caked snow is shuffled 20
 From the ploughboy's heavy shoon ;
 When the Night doth meet the Noon
 In a dark conspiracy
 To banish Even from her sky.
 Sit thee there, and send abroad,
 With a mind self-overaw'd,
 Fancy, high-commission'd :—send her !
 She has vassals to attend her :

She will bring, in spite of frost,
Beauties that the earth hath lost ; 30
She will bring thee, all together,
All delights of summer weather ;
All the buds and bells of May,
From dewy sward or thorny spray ;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth,
With a still, mysterious stealth :
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup,
And thou shalt quaff it : —thou shalt hear
Distant harvest-carols clear ; 40
Rustle of the reaped corn ;
Sweet birds antheming the morn :
And, in the same moment—hark !
'Tis the early April lark,
Or the rooks, with busy caw,
Foraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt, at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold ;
White-plum'd lillies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst ; 50
Shaded hyacinth, alway
Sapphire queen of the mid-May ;
And every leaf, and every flower
Pearled with the self-same shower.
Thou shalt see the field-mouse peep
Meagre from its celled sleep ;
And the snake all winter-thin
Cast on sunny bank its skin ;
Freckled nest-eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn-tree, 60

When the hen-bird's wing doth rest
 Quiet on her mossy nest ;
 Then the hurry and alarm
 When the bee-hive casts its swarm ;
 Acorns ripe down-pattering,
 While the autumn breezes sing.

Oh, sweet Fancy ! let her loose ;
 Every thing is spoilt by use :
 Where's the cheek that doth not fade,
 Too much gaz'd at ? Where's the maid 70
 Whose lip mature is ever new ?
 Where's the eye, however blue,
 Doth not weary ? Where's the face
 One would meet in every place ?
 Where's the voice, however soft,
 One would hear so very oft ?
 At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let, then, winged Fancy find
 Thee a mistress to thy mind : 80
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter, &
 Ere the God of Torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide ;
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's, when her zone
 Slipt its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her kirtle to her feet,
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid.—Break the mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash ; 90
 Quickly break her prison-string

And such joys as these she'll bring.—
 Let the winged Fancy roam,
 Pleasure never is at home.

ODE

*Written on a blank page before Beaumont and Fletcher's Tragi-
 Comedy 'The Fair Maid of the Inn.'*

BARDS of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth
 Have ye souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new ?
 Yes, and those of heaven commune
 With the spheres of sun and moon ;
 With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
 And the parle of voices thund'rous ;
 With the whisper of heaven's trees
 And one another, in soft ease 10
 Seated on Elysian lawns
 Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns ;
 Underneath large blue-bells tented,
 Where the daisies are rose-scented,
 And the rose herself has got
 Perfume which on earth is not ;
 Where the nightingale doth sing
 Not a senseless, tranced thing,
 But divine melodious truth ;
 Philosophic numbers smoothe ; 20
 Tales and golden histories
 Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
 On the earth ye live again ;
 And the souls ye left behind you
 Teach us, here, the way to find you,
 Where your other souls are joying,
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here, your earth-born souls still speak
 To mortals, of their little week ; 30
 Of their sorrows and delights ;
 Of their passions and their spite ;
 Of their glory and their shame ;
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us, every day,
 Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your souls on earth !
 Ye have souls in heaven too,
 Double-lived in regions new ! 40

× STANZAS

I

IN a drear-nighted December,
 Too happy, happy tree,
 Thy branches ne'er remember
 Their green felicity :
 The north cannot undo them,
 With a sleety whistle through them ;
 Nor frozen thawings glue them
 From budding at the prime.

II

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look ;
But with a sweet forgetting,
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

III

Ah ! would 'twere so with many
A gentle girl and boy !
But were there ever any
Writh'd not at pass'd joy ?
To know the change and feel it,
When there is none to heal it,
Nor numbed sense to steel it,
Was never said in rhyme.

< THE EVE OF SAINT MARK

UPON a Sabbath-day it fell ;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer ;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains ;
And, on the western window panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatur'd green vallies cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,

Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell :
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fire-side orat'ries ;
And moving with demurest air,
To even-song, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow, 20
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceas'd, the prayers begun,
And Bertha had not yet half done
A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
That all day long, from earliest morn,
Had taken captive her two eyes,
Among its golden broideries ;
Perplexed her with a thousand things,—
The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings, 30
Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
Azure saints in silver rays,
Moses' breastplate, and the seven
Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
The winged Lion of Saint Mark,
And the Covenantal Ark,
With its many mysteries,
Cherubim and golden mice.

Bertha was a maiden fair,
Dwelling in the old Minster-square ; 40

From her fire-side she could see,
Sidelong, its rich antiquity,
Far as the Bishop's garden-wall ;
Where sycamores and elm-trees tall,
Full-leav'd, the forest had outstript,
By no sharp north-wind ever nipt,
So shelter'd by the mighty pile.
Bertha arose, and read awhile,
With forehead 'gainst the window-pane.
Again she try'd, and then again, 50
Until the dusk eve left her dark
Upon the legend of St. Mark.
From plaited lawn-frill, fine and thin,
She lifted up her soft warm chin,
With aching neck and swimming eyes,
And daz'd with saintly imageries.

All was gloom, and silent all,
Save now and then the still foot-fall
Of one returning homewards late,
Past the echoing minster-gate. 60

The clamorous daws, that all the day
Above tree-tops and towers play,
Pair by pair had gone to rest,
Each in its ancient belfry-nest,
Where asleep they fall betimes,
To music of the drowsy chimes.

All was silent, all was gloom,
Abroad and in the homely room :
Down she sat, poor cheated soul !
And struck a lamp from the dismal coal ; 70

Lean'd forward, with bright drooping hair
 And slant book, full against the glare.
 Her shadow, in uneasy guise,
 Hover'd about, a giant size,
 On ceiling-beam and old oak chair,
 The parrot's cage, and panel square ;
 And the warm angled winter screen,
 On which were many monsters seen,
 Call'd doves of Siam, Lima mice,
 And legless birds of Paradise, 80
 Macaw, and tender Avadavat,
 And silken-furr'd Angora cat.
 Untir'd she read, her shadow still
 Glower'd about, as it would fill
 The room with wildest forms and shades,
 As though some ghostly queen of spades
 Had come to mock behind her back,
 And dance, and ruffle her garments black.
 Untir'd she read the legend page,
 Of holy Mark, from youth to age, 90
 On land, on sea, in pagan chains,
 Rejoicing for his many pains.
 Sometimes the learned eremite,
 With golden star, or dagger bright,
 Referr'd to pious poesies
 Written in smallest crow-quill size
 Beneath the text ; and thus the rhyme
 Was parcell'd out from time to time :
 — ' Als writith he of swevenis,
 Men han beforne they wake in bliss, 100
 Whanne that hir friendes thinke hem bound
 In crimped shroude farre under grounde ;

And how a litling child mote be
 A saint er its nativitie,
 Gif that the modre (God her blesse !)
 Kepen in solitarinesse,
 And kissen devout the holy croce.
 Of Goddes love, and Sathan's force,—
 He writith ; and thinges many mo :
 Of swiche thinges I may not show.
 Bot I must tellen verilie
 Somdel of Saintè Cicilie,
 And chieflie what he auctorethe
 Of Saintè Markis life and dethe : '

110

At length her constant eyelids come
 Upon the fervent martyrdom ;
 Then lastly to his holy shrine,
 Exalt amid the tapers' shine
 At Venice,—

ODE TO PSYCHE

O GODDESS ! hear these tuneless numbers, wrung
 By sweet enforcement and remembrance dear,
 And pardon that thy secrets should be sung
 Even into thine own soft-conched ear :
 Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see
 The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes ?
 I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
 Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side

In deepest grass, beneath the whisp'ring roof 10
 Of leaves and trembled blossoms, where there ran
 A brooklet, scarce espied :

'Mid hush'd, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed,
 Blue, silver-white, and budded Tyrian,
 They lay calm-breathing on the bedded grass ;
 Their arms embraced, and their pinions too ;
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
 As if disjoined by soft-handed slumber,
 And ready still past kisses to outnumber
 At tender eye-dawn of aurorean love : 20
 The winged boy I knew ;
 But who wast thou, O happy, happy dove ?
 His Psyche true !

O latest born and loveliest vision far
 Of all Olympus' faded hierarchy !
 Fairer than Phœbe's sapphire-region'd star,
 Or Vesper, amorous glow-worm of the sky ;
 Fairer than these, though temple thou hast none,
 Nor altar heap'd with flowers ;
 Nor virgin-choir to make delicious moan 30
 Upon the midnight hours ;
 No voice, no lute, no pipe, no incense sweet
 From chain-swung censer teeming ;
 No shrine, no grove, no oracle, no heat
 Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming

O brightest ! though too late for antique vows,
 Too, too late for the fond believing lyre,
 When holy were the haunted forest boughs, x
 Holy the air, the water, and the fire ;

Yet even in these days so far retir'd 40
From happy pieties, thy lucent fans,
Fluttering among the faint Olympians,
I see, and sing, by my own eyes inspir'd.
So let me be thy choir, and make a moan
Upon the midnight hours ;
Thy voice, thy lute, thy pipe, thy incense sweet
From swung censer teeming ;
Thy shrine, thy grove, thy oracle, thy heat
Of pale-mouth'd prophet dreaming.

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a fane 50
In some untrodden region of my mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in the wind :
Far, far around shall those dark-cluster'd trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep ;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be lull'd to sleep ;
And in the midst of this wide quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working brain, 60
With buds, and bells, and stars without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could feign,
Who breeding flowers, will never breed the same :
And there shall be for thee all soft delight
That shadowy thought can win,
A bright torch, and a casement ope at night,
To let the warm Love in !

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk :
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness,—
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

10

II

O, for a draught of vintage ! that hath been
 Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
 Tasting of Flora and the country green,
 Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth !
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
 With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
 And purple-stained mouth ;
 That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim :

20

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan ;

Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies ;
 • Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 • Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. 30

IV

Away ! away ! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and retards :
 Already with thee ! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays ;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown 39
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild ;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine ;
~~Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves ;~~
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

355

X VI

Darkling I listen ; and, for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath ;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy !
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
 No hungry generations tread thee down ;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown :
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn ;
 The same that oft-times hath
 Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

VIII

Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self !
 Adieu ! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu ! adieu ! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,

Up the hill-side ; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades :
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
 Fled is that music :—Do I wake or sleep ? 80

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
 Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
 What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady ?
 What men or gods are these ? What maidens loth ?
 What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
 What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ? 10

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
 Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
 Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve,
 ✕ She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
 For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair ! 20

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs for ever new ;

More happy love ! more happy, happy love !

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting, and for ever young ;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

30

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

And all her silkēn flanks with garlands drest ?

What little town by river or sea shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore

Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

40

V

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede

Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed ;

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

✓ 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all

• Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. 50

TO AUTUMN

I

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,

Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun ;

Conspiring with him how to load and bless

With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run ;

To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;

To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells

With a sweet kernel ; to set budding more,

And still more, later flowers for the bees,

Until they think warm days will never cease, 10

For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store ?

Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,

Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind ;

Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook

Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers :

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook ; 20

Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,

Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours,

III

Where are the songs of Spring ? Ay, where are they ?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue ;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river sallows, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies ;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn ; 30

Hedge-cricket sing ; and now with treble soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft ;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

I

O WHAT can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering ?

The sedge is wither'd from the lake,

And no birds sing.

II

O what can ail thee, knight-at arms,

So haggard and so woe-begone ?

The squirrel's granary is full,

And the harvest's done.

III

I see a lily on thy brow,

With anguish moist and fever dew ; 10

And on thy cheek a fading rose

Fast withereth too.

IV

I met a lady in the meads

Full beautiful, a faery's child ;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild—

V

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan—

20

VI

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long ;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song—

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew ;
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true—

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
With kisses four.

30

IX

And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
Who cried—‘ La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall ! ’ 40

XI

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gaped wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

ISABELLA ; OR, THE POT OF BASIL

A Story from Boccaccio

I

FAIR Isabel, poor simple Isabel !
Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye !
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart, some malady ;
They could not sit at meals but feel how well
It soothed each to be the other by ;
They could not, sure, beneath the same roof sleep
But to each other dream, and nightly weep.

II

With every morn their love grew tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer still ;
He might not in house, field, or garden stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing fill ;
And his continual voice was pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden rill ;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with the same.

III

He knew whose gentle hand was at the latch
Before the door had given her to his eyes ;
And from her chamber-window he would catch
Her beauty farther than the falcon spies ;

And constant as her vespers would he watch,
 Because her face was turn'd to the same skies ;
 And with sick longing all the night outwear,
 To hear her morning-step upon the stair.

IV

A whole long month of May in this sad plight
 Made their cheeks paler by the break of June :
 ' To-morrow will I bow to my delight,
 ' To-morrow will I ask my lady's boon.'—
 ' O may I never see another night,
 ' Lorenzo if thy lips breathe not love's tune,'— 30
 So spake they to their pillows ; but, alas,
 Honeyless days and days did he let pass ;

V

Until sweet Isabella's untouched cheek
 Fell sick within the rose's just domain,
 Fell thin as a young mother's, who doth seek
 By every lull to cool her infant's pain :
 ' How ill she is,' said he, ' I may not speak,
 ' And yet I will, and tell my love all plain :
 ' If looks speak love-laws, I will drink her tears,
 ' And at the least 'twill startle off her cares.' 40

VI

So said he one fair morning, and all day
 His heart beat awfully against his side ;
 And to his heart he inwardly did pray
 For power to speak ; but still the ruddy tide
 Stifled his voice, and puls'd resolve away—
^{Exaggerated} ~~Fever'd his high conceit of such a bride,~~ *the high conceit of such a bride*
 Yet brought him to the meekness of a child !
 Alas ! when passion is both meek and wild !

VII

So once more he had wak'd and anguished
 A dreary night of love and misery, 50
 If Isabel's quick eye had not been wed
 To every symbol on his forehead high ;
 She saw it waxing very pale and dead,
 And straight all flush'd ; so, lisped tenderly,
 ' Lorenzo ! '—here she ceas'd her timid quest,
 But in her tone and look he read the rest.

VIII

' O Isabella, I can half perceive
 ' That I may speak my grief into thine ear ;
 ' If thou didst ever anything believe,
 ' Believe how I love thee, believe how near 60
 ' My soul is to its doom : I would not grieve
 ' Thy hand by unwelcome pressing, would not fear
 ' Thine eyes by gazing ; but I cannot live
 ' Another night, and not my passion shrive.

IX

' Love ! thou art leading me from wintry cold,
 ' Lady ! thou leadest me to summer clime,
 ' And I must taste the blossoms that unfold
 ' In its ripe warmth this gracious morning time.'
 So said, his erewhile timid lips grew bold,
 And poesied with hers in dewy rhyme : 70
 Great bliss was with them, and great happiness
 Grew, like a lusty flower in June's caress.

X

Parting they seem'd to tread upon the air,
 Twin roses by the zephyr blown apart

Only to meet again more close, and share
 The inward fragrance of each other's heart.
 She, to her chamber gone, a ditty fair
 Sang, of delicious love and honey'd dart :
 He with light steps went up a western hill,
 And bade the sun farewell, and joy'd his fill.

80

XI

All close they met again, before the dusk,
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
 All close they met, all eves, before the dusk
 Had taken from the stars its pleasant veil,
 Close in a bower of hyacinth and musk,
 Unknown of any, free from whispering tale.
 Ah ! better had it been for ever so,
 Than idle ears should pleasure in their woe.

XII

Were they unhappy then ?—It cannot be—
 Too many tears for lovers have been shed,
 Too many sighs give we to them in fee,
 Too much of pity after they are dead,
 Too many doleful stories do we see,
 Whose matter in bright gold were best be read ;
 Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse
 Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

90

XIII

But, for the general award of love,
 The little sweet doth kill much bitterness ;
 Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
 And Isabella's was a great distress,

100

Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

XIV

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
 Enriched from ancestral merchandize,
 And for them many a weary hand did swelt ^{in the sun}
 In torched mines and noisy factories,
 And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
 In blood from stinging whip ;—with hollow eyes 110
 Many all day in dazzling river stood,
 To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

XV

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
 And went all naked to the hungry shark ;
 For them his ears gush'd blood ; for them in death
 The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
 Lay full of darts ; for them alone did seethe
 A thousand men in troubles wide and dark :
 Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
 That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel. 120

XVI

Why were they proud ? Because their marble founts
 Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears ?—
 Why were they proud ? Because fair orange-mounts
 Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs ?— ^{as the}
 Why were they proud ? Because red-lin'd accounts ^{books}
 Were richer than the songs of Grecian years ?—
 Why were they proud ? again we ask aloud,
 Why in the name of Glory were they proud ?

XVII

Yet were these Florentines as self-retired
 In hungry pride and gainful cowardice, 130
 As two close Hebrews in that land inspired,
 Paled in and vineyarded from beggar-spies;
 The hawks of ship-mast forests—the untired
 And pannier'd mules for ducats and old lies—
 Quick cat's paws on the generous stray-away,—
 Great wits in Spanish, Tuscan, and Malay.

XVIII

How was it these same ledger-men could spy
 Fair Isabella in her downy nest?
 How could they find out in Lorenzo's eye
 A straying from his toil? Hot Egypt's pest 140
 Into their vision covetous and sly!
 How could these money-bags see east and west?—
 Yet so they did—and every dealer fair
 Must see behind, as doth the hunted hare.

XIX

O eloquent and famed Boccaccio!
 Of thee we now should ask forgiving boon,
 And of thy spicy myrtles as they blow,
 And of thy roses amorous of the moon,
 And of thy lillies, that do paler grow
 Now they can no more hear thy ghittorn's tune, 150
 For venturing syllables that ill beseeem
 The quiet glooms of such a piteous theme.

XX

Grant thou a pardon here, and then the tale
 Shall move on soberly, as it is meet;

There is no other crime, no mad assail

To make old prose in modern rhyme more sweet :
But it is done—succeed ~~the~~ verse or fail—

To honour thee, and thy gone spirit greet ;
To stead thee as a verse in English tongue,
An echo of thee in the north-wind sung. 160

XXI

These brethren having found by many signs

What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
And how she lov'd him too, each unconfines

His bitter thoughts to other, well nigh mad
That he, the servant of their trade designs,

Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees
To some high noble and his olive-trees.

XXII

And many a jealous conference had they,

And many times they bit their lips alone, 170
Before they fix'd upon a surest way

To make the youngster for his crime atone ;
And at the last, these men of cruel clay

Cut Mercy with a sharp knife to the bone ;
For they resolved in some forest dim
To kill Lorenzo, and there bury him.

XXIII

So on a pleasant morning, as he leant

Into the sun-rise, o'er the balustrade
Of the garden-terrace, towards him they bent

Their footing through the dews ; and to him said, 180

‘ You seem there in the quiet of content,
 ‘ Lorenzo, and we are most loth to invade
 ‘ Calm speculation ; but if you are wise,
 ‘ Bestride your steed while cold is in the skies.

XXIV

‘ To-day we purpose, aye, this hour we mount
 ‘ To spur three leagues towards the Apennine ;
 ‘ Come down, we pray thee, ere the hot sun count
 ‘ His dewy rosary on the cglantine.’

Lorenzo, courteously as he was wont,
 Bow’d a fair greeting to these serpents’ whine ; 190
 And went in haste, to get in readiness,
 With belt, and spur, and bracing huntsman’s dress.

XXV

And as he to the court-yard pass’d along.
 Each third step did he pause, and listen’d oft
 If he could hear his lady’s matin-song,
 Or the light whisper of her footstep soft ;
 And as he thus over his passion hung,
 He heard a laugh full musical aloft ;
 When, looking up, he saw her features bright
 Smile through an in-door lattice, all delight. 200

XXVI

‘ Love, Isabel ! ’ said he, ‘ I was in pain
 ‘ Lest I should miss to bid thee a good morrow :
 ‘ Ah ! what if I should lose thee, when so fain
 ‘ I am to stifle all the heavy sorrow
 ‘ Of a poor three hours’ absence ? but we’ll gain
 ‘ Out of the amorous dark what day doth borrow.
 ‘ Good bye ! I’ll soon be back.’—‘ Good bye ! ’ said she :—
 And as he went she chanted merrily.

XXVII

So the two brothers and their murder'd man
 Rode past fair Florence, to where Arno's stream 210
 Gurgles through straiten'd banks, and still doth fan

Itself with dancing bulrush, and the bream
 Keeps head against the freshets. Sick and wan

The brothers' faces in the ford did seem,
 Lorenzo's flush with love.—They pass'd the water
 Into a forest quiet for the slaughter.

XXVIII

There was Lorenzo slain and buried in,

There in that forest did his great love cease ;
 Ah ! when a soul doth thus its freedom win,

It aches in loneliness—is ill at peace 220
 As the break-covert blood-hounds of such sin :

They dipp'd their swords in the water, and did tease
 Their horses homeward, with convulsed spur,
 Each richer by his being a murderer.

XXIX

They told their sister how, with sudden speed,

Lorenzo had ta'en ship for foreign lands,
 Because of some great urgency and need

In their affairs, requiring trusty hands.

Poor Girl ! put on thy stifling widow's weed,

And 'scape at once from Hope's accursed bands ; 230
 To-day thou wilt not see him, nor to-morrow,
 And the next day will be a day of sorrow.

XXX

She weeps alone for pleasures not to be ;

Sorely she wept until the night came on,

Time after time, to quiet her. Their crimes

Came on them, like a smoke from Hinnom's vale ;
 And every night in dreams they groan'd aloud, ^{some rise & die in}
 To see their sister in her snowy shroud. ^{the snows}

XXXIV

And she had died in drowsy ignorance,

But for a thing more deadly dark than all ;
 It came like a fierce potion, drunk by chance,

Which saves a sick man from the feather'd pall
 For some few gasping moments ; like a lance,

Waking an Indian from his cloudy hall 270
 With cruel pierce, and bringing him again
 Sense of the gnawing fire at heart and brain.

XXXV

It was a vision.—In the drowsy gloom,

The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
 Lorenzo stood, and wept : the forest tomb

Had marr'd his glossy hair which once could shoot
 Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom

Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
 From his lorn voice, and past his ^{measured with clang} loamed ears
 Had made a miry channel for his tears. 280

XXXVI

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spake ;

For there was striving, in its piteous tongue,
 To speak as when on earth it was awake,

And Isabella on its music hung :
 Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,

As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung ;
 And through it moan'd a ghostly under-song,
 Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briars among.

XXXVII

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
 With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof 190
 From the poor girl by magic of their light,
 The while it did unthread the horrid woof
 Of the late darken'd time,—the murderous spite
 Of pride and avarice,—the dark pine roof
 In the forest,—and the sodden turfed dell,
 Where, without any word, from stabs he fell.

XXXVIII

Saying moreover, ' Isabel, my sweet !
 ' Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
 ' And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet ;
 ' Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed 300
 ' Their leaves and prickly nuts ; a sheep-fold bleat
 ' Comes from beyond the river to my bed :
 ' Go, shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
 ' And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

XXXIX

' I am a shadow now, alas ! alas !
 ' Upon the skirts of human-nature dwelling
 ' Alone : I chant alone the holy mass,
 ' While little sounds of life are round me knelling,
 ' And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
 ' And many a chapel bell the hour is telling, 310
 ' Paining me through : those sounds grow strange to me,
 ' And thou art distant in Humanity.

XL

' I know what was, I feel full well what is,
 ' And I should rage, if spirits could go mad ;

' Though I forget the taste of earthly bliss,
 ' That paleness warms my grave, as though I had
 ' A Seraph chosen from the bright abyss *Heaven*,
 ' To be my spouse : thy paleness makes me glad ;
 ' Thy beauty grows upon me, and I feel
 ' A greater love through all my essence steal.' 320

XLI

The Spirit mourn'd ' Adieu ! '—dissolv'd and left
 The atom darkness in a slow turmoil ;
 As when of healthful midnight sleep bereft,
 Thinking on rugged hours and fruitless toil,
 We put our eyes into a pillowy cleft,
 And see the spangly gloom froth up and boil :
 It made sad Isabella's eyelids ache,
 And in the dawn she started up awake ;

XLII

' Ha ! ha ! ' said she, ' I knew not this hard life,
 ' I thought the worst was simple misery ; 330
 ' I thought some Fate with pleasure or with strife
 ' Portion'd us—happy days, or else to die ;
 ' But there is crime—a brother's bloody knife !
 ' Sweet Spirit, thou hast school'd my infancy :
 ' I'll visit thee for this, and kiss thine eyes,
 ' And greet thee morn and even in the skies.'

XLIII

When the full morning came, she had devised
 How she might secret to the forest hie ;
 How she might find the clay, so dearly prized,
 And sing to it one latest lullaby ; 340

How her short absence might be unsurmised,

While she the inmost of the dream would try.

Resolv'd, she took with her an aged nurse,
And went into that dismal forest-hearse.

XLIV

See, as they creep along the river side,

How she doth whisper to that aged Dame,

And, after looking round the champaign wide,

Shows her a knife.—‘What feverous hectic flame
Burns in thee, child?—What good can thee betide,

‘That thou should’st smile again?’—The evening came,
And they had found Lorenzo’s earthy bed ; 351
The flint was there, the berries at his head.

XLV

Who hath not loiter’d in a green church-yard,

And let his spirit, like a demon-mole,

Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,

To see scull, coffin’d bones, and funeral stole ;

Pitying each form that hungry Death hath marr’d,

And filling it once more with human soul ?

Ah ! this is holiday to what was felt

When Isabella by Lorenzo knelt. 360

XLVI

She gaz’d into the fresh-thrown mould, as though

One glance did fully all its secrets tell ;

Clearly she saw, as other eyes would know

Pale limbs at bottom of a crystal well ;

Upon the murderous spot she seem’d to grow, .

Like to a native lily of the dell :

Then with her knife, all sudden, she began

To dig more fervently than misers can.

XLVII

Soon she turn'd up a soiled glove, whereon
 Her silk had play'd in purple phantasies,
 She kiss'd it with a lip more chill than stone,
 And put it in her bosom, where it dries
 And freezes utterly unto the bone
 Those dainties made to still an infant's cries :
 Then 'gan she work again ; nor stay'd her care,
 But to throw back at times her veiling hair.

XLVIII

That old nurse stood beside her wondering,
 Until her heart felt pity to the core
 At sight of such a dismal labouring,
 And so she kneeled, with her locks all hoar,
 And put her lean hands to the horrid thing :
 Three hours they labour'd at this travail sore ;
 At last they felt the kernel of the grave,
 And Isabella did not stamp and rave.

XLIX

Ah ! wherefore all this wormy circumstance ?
 Why linger at the yawning tomb so long ?
 O for the gentleness of old Romance,
 The simple plaining of a minstrel's song !
 Fair reader, at the old tale take a glance,
 For here, in truth, it doth not well belong
 To speak—O turn thee to the very tale,
 And taste the music of that vision pale.

With duller steel than the Perséan sword
 They cut away no formless monster's head,

But one, whose gentleness did well accord
 With death, as life. The ancient harps have said,
 Love never dies, but lives, immortal Lord :
 If Love impersonate was ever dead,
 Pale Isabella kiss'd it, and low moan'd.
 'Twas love ; cold,—dead indeed, but not dethroned. 400

LI

In anxious secrecy they took it home,
 And then the prize was all for Isabel :
 She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,
 And all around each eye's sepulchral cell
 Pointed each fringed lash ; the smeared loam
 With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,
 She drench'd away :—and still she comb'd, and kept
 Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd, and wept.

LII

Then in a silken scarf,—sweet with the dews
 Of precious flowers pluck'd in Araby, 410
 And divine liquids come with odorous ooze
 Through the cold serpent-pipe refreshfully,—
 She wrapp'd it up ; and for its tomb did choose
 A garden-pot, wherein she laid it by,
 And cover'd it with mould, and o'er it set
 Sweet Basil, which her tears kept ever wet.

LIII

And she forgot the stars, the moon, and sun,
 And she forgot the blue 'above the trees,
 And she forgot the dells where waters run,
 And she forgot the chilly autumn breeze ; 420

She had no knowledge when the day was done,
And the new morn she saw not : but in peace
Hung over her sweet Basil evermore,
And moisten'd it with tears unto the core.

LIV

And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil-tufts in Florence ; for it drew
Nurture besides, and life, from human fears, 429
From the fast mouldering head there shut from view :
So that the jewel, safely casketed,
Came forth, and in perfumed leaflets spread.

LV

O Melancholy, linger here awhile !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
O Echo, Echo, from some sombre isle,
Unknown, Lethean, sigh to us—O sigh !
Spirits in grief, lift up your heads, and smile ;
Lift up your heads, sweet Spirits, heavily,
And make a pale light in your cypress glooms,
Tinting with silver wan your marble tombs. 440

LVI

Moan hither, all ye syllables of woe,
From the deep throat of sad Melpomene !
Through bronzed lyre in tragic order go,
And touch the strings into a mystery ;
Sound mournfully upon the winds and low ;
For simple Isabel is soon to be
Among the dead : She withers, like a palm
Cut by an Indian for its juicy balm.

LVII

O leave the palm to wither by itself ;
 Let not quick Winter chill its dying hour !— 450
 It may not be—those Baälites of pelf,
 Her brethren, noted the continual shower
 From her dead eyes ; and many a curious elf,
 Among her kindred, wonder'd that such dower
 Of youth and beauty should be thrown aside
 By one mark'd out to be a Noble's bride.

LVIII

And, furthermore, her brethren wonder'd much
 Why she sat drooping by the Basil green,
 And why it flourished, as by magic touch ; 459
 Greatly they wonder'd what the thing might mean :
 They could not surely give belief, that such
 A very nothing would have power to wean
 Her from her own fair youth, and pleasures gay,
 And even remembrance of her love's delay.

LIX

Therefore they watch'd a time when they might sift
 This hidden whim ; and long they watch'd in vain ;
 For seldom did she go to chapel-shrift,
 And seldom felt she any hunger-pain ;
 And when she left, she hurried back, as swift
 As bird on wing to breast its eggs again ; 470
 And, patient as a hen-bird, sat her there
 Beside her Basil, weeping through her hair.

LX

Yet they contriv'd to steal the Basil-pot,
 And to examine it in secret place ;
 The thing was vile with green and livid spot,
 And yet they knew it was Lorenzo's face :

The guerdon of their murder they had got,
And so left Florence in a moment's space,
Never to turn again.—Away they went,
With blood upon their heads, to banishment. 480

LXI

O Melancholy, turn thine eyes away !
O Music, Music, breathe despondingly !
O Echo, Echo, on some other day,
From isles Lethæan, sigh to us—O sigh !
Spirits of grief, sing not your “ Well-a-way ! ”
For Isabel, sweet Isabel, will die ;
Will die a death too lone and incomplete,
Now they have ta'en away her Basil sweet.

LXII

Piteous she look'd on dead and senseless things,
Asking for her lost Basil amorously ; 490
And with melodious chuckle in the strings
Of her lorn voice, she oftentimes would cry
After the Pilgrim in his wanderings,
To ask him where her Basil was ; and why
'Twas hid from her : ‘ For cruel 'tis,’ said she,
‘ To steal my Basil-pot away from me.’

LXIII

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn,
Imploring for her Basil to the last.
No heart was there in Florence but did mourn
In pity of her love, so overcast. 500
And a sad ditty of this story born
From mouth to mouth through all the country pass'd :
Still is the burthen sung—‘ O cruelty,
‘ To steal my Basil-pot away from me ! ’

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

I

ST. AGNES' EVE—Ah, bitter chill it was !
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold ;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold :
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man ; 10
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees :
The sculptur'd dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails :
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by ; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20

Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor ;
But no—already had his deathbell rung :
The joys of all his life were said and sung :
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve :
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft ;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide :
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests :
'The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their
breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting facrily
The brain, new stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away, 41
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,

And soft adorings from their loves receive
 Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
 If ceremonies due they did aright ; 50
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lilly white ;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline :
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,
 She scarcely heard : her maiden eyes divine,
 Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
 Pass by—she heeded not at all : in vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60
 And back retir'd ; not cool'd by high disdain,
 But she saw not : her heart was elsewhere :
 She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short :
 The hallow'd hour was near at hand : she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
 Of whisperers in anger, or in sport ;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
 Hoodwink'd with faery fancy ; all amort, 70
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
 She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,

Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
 Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen ; 80
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things
 have been.

X

He ventures in : let no buzz'd whisper tell :
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
 Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel :
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage : not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90

XI

Ah, happy chance ! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland :
 He startled her ; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, ' Mercy, Porphyro ! hie thee from this place :
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race !

•

XII

' Get hence ! get hence ! there's dwarfish Hildebrand ;
 ' He had a fever late, and in the fit 101

' He cursed thee and thine, both house and land :
 ' Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
 ' More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me ! flit !
 ' Flit like a ghost away.'—' Ah, Gossip dear,
 ' We're safe enough ; here in this arm-chair sit,
 ' And tell me how '—' Good Saints ! not here, not here ;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.'

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume, 110
 And as she mutter'd ' Well-a—well-a-day ! ' ^f
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 ' Now tell me where is Madeline,' said he,
 ' O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
 ' Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 'When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously.'

XIV

' St. Agnes ! Ah ! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
 ' Yet men will murder upon holy days :
 ' Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, 120
 ' And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 ' To venture so : it fills me with amaze
 ' To see thee, Porphyro !—St. Agnes' Eve !
 ' God's help ! my lady fair the conjuror plays
 ' This very night : good angels her deceive !
 ' But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve.'

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,

Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth clos'd a wond'rous riddle-book, 130
As spectacl'd she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose ; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot : then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start :
' A cruel man and impious thou art : 140
' Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
' Alone with her good angels, far apart
' From wicked men like thee. Go, go !—I deem
' Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst
seem.'

XVII

' I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,'
Quoth Porphyro : ' O may I ne'er find grace
' When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
' If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
' Or look with ruffian passion in her face :
' Good Angela, believe me by these tears ; 150
' Or I will, even in a moment's space,
' Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
' And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves
and bears.'

XVIII

' Ah ! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul ?
' A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,

' Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll ;
 ' Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
 ' Were never miss'd.'—Thus plaining, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro :
 So woful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160
 That Angela gives promise she will do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy
 That he might see her beauty unespied,
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
 While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers met, 170
 * Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

' It shall be as thou wishest,' said the Dame :
 ' All gates and dainties shall be stored there
 ' Quickly on this feast-night : by the tambour frame
 ' Her own lute thou wilt see : no time to spare,
 ' For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
 ' On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
 ' Wait here, my child, with patience ; kneel in prayer
 ' The while : Ah ! thou must needs the lady wed,
 ' Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.' 180

XXI

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
 The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd ;

The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
 To follow her ; with aged eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd, and chaste
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
 His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade, 190
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
 When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
 Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware :
 With silver taper's light, and pious care,
 She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed ;
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in ;
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died : 200
 She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide :
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide !
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side ;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
 All garlanded with carven imag'ries

Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, 210
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings ;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and
 kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon ;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest, 220
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint :
 She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
 Save wings, for heaven :—Porphyro grew faint :
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives : her vespers done,
 Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees ;
 Unclasps her warm'd jewels one by one ;
 Loosens her fragrant boddice ; by degrees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees : 230
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,

Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away ;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day ;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain ; 240
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray ;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness ;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself : then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo !—how fast she
slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet :—
O for some drowsy Morpheap amulet !
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone :— 260
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,

While he from forth the closet brought a heap
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd ;
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
 And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon ;
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
 From Fez ; and spiced dainties, every one,
 From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon. 270

XXXI

These delicacies he heap'd with glowing hand
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright
 Of wreathed silver : sumptuous they stand
 In the retired quiet of the night,
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
 ' And now, my love, my scrapp fair, awake !
 ' Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite :
 ' Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
 ' Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.'

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm 280
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
 By the dusk curtains :—'twas a midnight charm
 Impossible to melt as iced stream :
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam ;
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies :
 It seem'd he never, never could redeem
 From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes ;
 So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be, 290

He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd, ' La belle dame sans mercy : '
Close to her ear touching the melody :—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone :
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd 300
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh ;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

‘ Ah, Porphyro ! ’ said she, ‘ but even now
 ‘ Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
 ‘ Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
 ‘ And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear : 310
 ‘ How chang’d thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear ! x
 ‘ Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
 ‘ Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
 ‘ Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.’

XX XVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,

Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
 Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose ;
 Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—
 Solution sweet : meantime the frost-wind blows
 Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
 Against the window-panes ; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark : quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet :
 ' This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline !'
 'Tis dark : the iced gusts still rave and beat :
 ' No dream, alas ! alas ! and woe is mine !
 ' Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
 ' Cruel ! what traitor could thee hither bring ? 330
 ' I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
 ' Though thou forsakest a deceived thing ;—
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing.'

XXXVIII

' My Madeline ! sweet dreamer ! lovely bride !
 ' Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest ?
 ' Thy beauty's shield, heart-shap'd and vermeil dyed ?
 ' Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
 ' After so many hours of toil and quest,
 ' A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.
 ' Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest 340
 ' Saving of thy sweet self ; if thou think'st well
 ' To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

' Hark ! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
 ' Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed :

' Arise—arise ! the morning is at hand ;—
 ' The bloated wassaillers will never heed :—
 ' Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
 ' There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
 ' Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead :
 ' Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be, 350
 ' For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
 For there were sleeping dragons all around,
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
 In all the house was heard no human sound.
 A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door ;
 The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
 Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar ;
 And the long carpet rose along the gusty floor. 360

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall ;
 Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide ;
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
 With a huge empty flaggon by his side :
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns :
 By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide :—
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones :—
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone : aye, ages long ago 370
 These lovers fled away into the storm.

That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform ;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

HYPERION

A FRAGMENT

BOOK I

DEEP in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-hair'd Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair ;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest. 10
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade : the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet had stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unscptred ; and his realmless eyes were closed ;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth, 20
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place ;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world ;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height : she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck ;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel. 30
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh ! how unlike marble was that face :
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun :
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear 40
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain :
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenour and deep organ tone :
Som mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents ; O how frail 50
To that large utterance of the early Gods !
' Saturn, look up !—though wherefore, poor old King ?
' I have no comfort for thee, no not one :

' I cannot say, " O wherefore sleepest thou ? "
 ' For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
 ' Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God ;
 ' And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
 ' Has from thy sceptre pass'd ; and all the air
 ' Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
 ' Thy thunder, conscious of the new command, 60
 ' Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house ;
 ' And thy sharp lightning in unpractis'd hands
 ' Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
 ' O aching time ! O moments big as years !
 ' All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
 ' And press it so upon our weary griefs
 ' That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
 ' Saturn, sleep on :—O thoughtless, why did I
 ' Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude ?
 ' Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes ? 70
 ' Saturn, sleep on ! while at thy feet I weep.'

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
 Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
 Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
 Save from one gradual solitary gust
 Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
 As if the ebbing air had but one wave ;
 So came these words and went ; the while in tears
 She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground, 80
 Just where her falling hair might be outspread
 A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
 One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
 Her silver seasons four upon the night,

And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern ;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet :
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone, 90
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess ; and then spake,
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady :
' O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
' Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face ;
' Look up, and let me see our doom in it ;
' Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
' Is Saturn's ; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
' Of Saturn ; tell me, if this wrinkling brow, 100
' Naked and bare of its great diadem,
' Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
' To make me desolate ? whence came the strength ?
' How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,
' While Fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp ?
' But it is so ; and I am smother'd up,
' And buried from all godlike exercise
' Of influence benign on planets pale,
' Of admonitions to the winds and seas,
' Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting, 110
' And all those acts which Deity supreme
' Doth ease its heart of love in.—I am gone
' Away from my own bosom : I have left
' My strong identity, my real self,
' Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
' Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search !

' Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
 ' Upon all space : space starr'd, and lorn of light ;
 ' Space region'd with life-air ; and barren void ;
 ' Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.— 120
 ' Search, Thea, search ! and tell me, if thou seest
 ' A certain shape or shadow, making way
 ' With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
 ' A heaven he lost erewhile : it must—it must
 ' Be of ripe progress—Saturn must be King.
 ' Yes, there must be a golden victory ;
 ' There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
 ' Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
 ' Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
 ' Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir 130
 ' Of strings in hollow shells ; and there shall be
 ' Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
 ' Of the sky-children ; I will give command :
 ' Thea ! Thea ! Thea ! where is Saturn ? '

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
 And made his hands to struggle in the air,
 His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
 His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
 He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep ;
 A little time, and then again he snatch'd 140
 Utterance thus.—' But cannot I create ?
 ' Cannot I form ? Cannot I fashion forth
 ' Another world, another universe,
 ' To overbear and crumble this to naught ?
 ' Where is another chaps ? Where ? '—That word
 Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
 The rebel three.—Thea was startled up,

And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
 As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.
 ' This cheers our fallen house : come to our friends, ' 150
 ' O Saturn ! come away, and give them heart ;
 ' I know the covert, for thence came I hither.'
 Thus brief ; then with beseeching eyes she went
 With backward footing through the shade a space :
 He follow'd and she turn'd to lead the way
 Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
 Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
 More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
 Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe ; 160
 The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
 Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
 And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
 But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
 His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty :—
 Blazing Hyperion on his orb'd fire
 Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
 From man to the sun's God ; yet unsecure :
 For as among us mortals omens drear
 Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he— 170
 Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
 Or the familiar visiting of one
 Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
 Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp ;
 But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
 Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
 Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
 And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,

Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
 Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries ; 180
 And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
 Flush'd angerly : while sometimes eagle's wings,
 Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
 Darken'd the place ; and neighing steeds were heard,
 Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
 Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
 Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
 Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
 Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick :
 And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west, 190
 After the full completion of fair day,—
 For rest divine upon exalted couch
 And slumber in the arms of melody,
 He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease
 With stride colossal, on from hall to hall ;
 While far within each aisle and deep recess,
 His winged minions in close clusters stood,
 Amaz'd and full of fear ; like anxious men
 Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
 When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers. 200
 Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
 Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
 Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
 Came slope upon the threshold of the west ;
 Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
 In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
 Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
 And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies .
 And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
 In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye, 210

That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath ;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades, 220
Until he reach'd the great main cupola ;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region ; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,
His voice leaped out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result : ' O dreams of day and night !
' O monstrous forms ! O effigies of pain !
' O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom !
' O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools ! 230
' Why do I know ye ? why have I seen ye ? why
' Is my eternal essence thus distraught
' To see and to behold these horrors new ?
' Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall ?
' Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
' This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
' This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
' These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
' Of all my lucent empire ? It is left
' Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine. 240
' The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,

‘ I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
‘ Even here, into my centre of repose,
‘ The shady visions come to domineer,
‘ Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.—
‘ Fall !—No, by Tellus and her briny robes !
‘ Over the fiery frontier of my realms
‘ I will advance a terrible right arm
‘ Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
‘ And bid old Saturn take his throne again.’— 250

He spake, and ceas’d, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth ;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out ‘ Hush ! ’
So at Hyperion’s words the Phantoms pale,
Bestirr’d themselves, thrice horrible and cold ;
And from the mirror’d level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown, 260
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convuls’d
From over-strained might. Releas’d, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breath’d fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear’d them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean’s chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through, 270
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds ;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,

Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the zenith,—hieroglyphics old
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries : 280
Now lost, save what we find on remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart ; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled.—Two wings this orb
Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach :
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspread were ;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne 290
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not :—No, though a primeval God :
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb ; the porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night ;
And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,
Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent 300
His spirit to the sorrow of the time ;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars

Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear,
' O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
' And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries 310
' All unrevealed even to the powers
' Which met at thy creating ; at whose joys
' And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
' I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence ;
' And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
' Distinct, and visible ; symbols divine,
' Manifestations of that beauteous life
' Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space :
' Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child !
' Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses ! 320
' There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
' Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
' I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne !
' To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
' Found way from forth the thunders round his head !
' Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
' Art thou, too, near such doom ? vague fear there is :
' For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
' Divine ye were created, and divine
' In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd, 330
' Unruffled, like high Gods, ye liv'd and ruled :
' Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath ;
' Actions of rage and passion ; even as
' I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
' In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son !
' Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall !
' Yet do thou strive ; as thou art capable,

' As thou canst move about, an evident God ;
 ' And canst oppose to each malignant hour
 ' Ethereal presence :—I am but a voice ; 340
 ' My life is but the life of winds and tides,
 ' No more than winds and tides can I avail :—
 ' But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
 ' Of circumstance ; yea, seize the arrow's barb
 ' Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth !
 ' For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
 ' Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
 ' And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.'—
 Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
 Hyperion arose, and on the stars 350
 Lifted his curved lids, and kept them wide
 Until it ceas'd ; and still he kept them wide :
 And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
 Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
 Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
 Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
 And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

HYPERION. BOOK II

JUST at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
 Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
 And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
 Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
 It was a den where no insulting light
 Could glimmer on their tears ; where their own groans
 They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
 Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents hoarse,

Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd 10
Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns ;
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled :
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyryon, 20
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath ;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, crampt and screw'd ;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world ;
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered ; 30
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear,
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways ; like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor to his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair. 40

Creüs was one ; his ponderous iron mace
Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iäpetus another ; in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck ; its barbed tongue
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all its uncurl'd length
Dead ; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus : prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain ; for still upon the flint 50
He ground severe his skull with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most enormous Caf,
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons :
More thought than woe was in her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory ;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles. 60
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So lent she, not so fair, upon a tusk
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelf,
Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,
Shadow'd Enceladus ; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads ;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war, 70
Not long delay'd, that scar'd the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.

Not far hence Atlas ; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and Tethys, in whose lap
Sobb'd Clymene among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay Themis, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded round from sight ;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds : 80
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight ? And she must chaunt
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease :
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain, 90
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face :
There saw she direst strife ; the supreme God
At war with all the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain ; for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A disanointing poison : so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe. 100

•
As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house

Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise ;
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration ; and he shouted,
' Titans, behold your God ! ' at which some groan'd ; 110
Some started on their feet ; some also shouted ;
Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence ;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eye-brows thin and jet, and hollow eyes.
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice ; there is a noise
Among immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of utterless thought, 120
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp :
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines :
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds ; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up—' Not in my own sad breast,
' Which is its own great judge and searcher out, 130
' Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
' Not in the legends of the first of days,
' Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
' Which starry Uranus with finger bright
' Sav'd from the shores of darkness, when the waves

‘ Low-ebb’d still hid it up in shallow gloom ;—
 ‘ And the which book ye know I ever kept
 ‘ For my firm-based footstool :—Ah, infirm !
 ‘ Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
 ‘ Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,— 140
 ‘ At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling
 ‘ One against one, or two, or three, or all
 ‘ Each several one against the other three
 ‘ As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
 ‘ Drown both, and press them both against earth’s face,
 ‘ Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
 ‘ Unhinges the poor world ;—not in that strife,
 ‘ Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
 ‘ Can I find reason why ye should be thus :
 ‘ No, no-where can unriddle, though I search, 150
 ‘ And pore on Nature’s universal scroll
 ‘ Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
 ‘ The first-born of all shap’d and palpable Gods
 ‘ Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
 ‘ Is untremendous might. Yet ye are here,
 ‘ O’erwhelm’d, and spurn’d, and batter’d, ye are here !
 ‘ O Titans, shall I say, “ Arise ! ”—Ye groan :
 ‘ Shall I say “ Crouch ! ”—Ye groan. What can I then ?
 ‘ O Heaven wide ! O unseen parent dear !
 ‘ What can I ? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods, 160
 ‘ How we can war, how engine our great wrath !
 ‘ O speak your counsel now, for Saturn’s ear
 ‘ Is all a-hunger’d. Thou, Oceanus,
 ‘ Ponderest high and deep ; and in thy face
 ‘ I see, astonied, that severe content
 ‘ Which comes of thought and musing : give us help ! ’

So ended Saturn ; and the God of the Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began, 170
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
' O ye, whom wrath consumes ! who, passion-stung,
' Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies !
' Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
' My voice is not a bellows unto ire.
' Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
' How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop :
' And in the proof much comfort will I give,
' If ye will take that comfort in its truth. 180
' We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
' Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
' Hast sifted well the atom-universe ;
' But for this reason, that thou art the King,
' And only blind from sheer supremacy,
' One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
' Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
' And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
' So art thou not the last ; it cannot be :
' Thou art not the beginning nor the end. 190
' From chaos and parental darkness came
' Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
' That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
' Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
' And with it light, and light, engendering
' Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
' The whole enormous matter into life.
' Upon that very hour, our parentage,

‘ The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest :
‘ Then thou first born, and we the giant race, 200
‘ Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
‘ Now comes the pain of truth, to whom ’tis pain ;
‘ O folly ! for to bear all naked truths,
‘ And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
‘ That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well !
‘ As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
‘ Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;
‘ And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
‘ In form and shape compact and beautiful,
‘ In will, in action free, companionship, 210
‘ And thousand other signs of purer life ;
‘ So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
‘ A power more strong in beauty, born of us
‘ And fated to excel us, as we pass
‘ In glory that old Darkness : nor are we
‘ Thereby more conquer’d, than by us the rule
‘ Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil
‘ Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
‘ And feedeth still, more comely than itself ?
‘ Can it deny the chieftdom of green groves ? 220
‘ Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
‘ Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
‘ To wander wherewithal and find its joys ?
‘ We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
‘ Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
‘ But eagles golden-feather’d, who do tower
‘ Above us in their beauty, and must reign
‘ In right thereof ; for ’tis the eternal law
‘ That first in beauty should be first in might :
‘ Yea, by that law, another race may drive 230

‘ Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
‘ Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas.
‘ My disposessor ? Have ye seen his face ?
‘ Have ye beheld his chariot, foam’d along
‘ By noble winged creatures he hath made ?
‘ I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
‘ With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
‘ That it enforc’d me to bid sad farewell
‘ To all my empire : farewell sad I took,
‘ And hither came, to see how dolorous fate 240
‘ Had wrought upon ye ; and how I might best
‘ Give consolation in this woe extreme.
‘ Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.’

Whether through poz’d conviction, or disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell ?
But so it was, none answer’d for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene ;
And yet she answer’d not, only complain’d,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild, 250
Thus wording timidly among the fierce :
‘ O Father, I am here the simplest voice,
‘ And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
‘ And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
‘ There to remain for ever, as I fear :
‘ I would not bode of evil, if I thought
‘ So weak a creature could turn off the help
‘ Which by just right should come of mighty Gods ;
‘ Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
‘ Of what I heard, and how it made me weep, 260
‘ And know that we had parted from all hope.

' I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
' Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
' Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
' Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief ;
' Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth ;
' So that I felt a movement in my heart
' To chide, and to reproach that solitude
' With songs of misery, music of our woes ;
' And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell 270
' And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
' O melody no more ! for while I sang,
' And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
' The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
' Just opposite, an island of the sea,
' There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
' That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
' I threw my shell away upon the sand,
' And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
' With that new blissful golden melody. 280
' A living death was in each gush of sounds,
' Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
' That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
' Like pearl beads dropping sudden from their string :
' And then another, then another strain,
' Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
' With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
' To hover round my head, and make me sick
' Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
' And I was stopping up my frantic ears, 290
' When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
' A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
' And still it cried, " Apollo ! young Apollo !

‘ “ The morning-bright Apollo ! young Apollo ! ”
 ‘ I fled, it follow’d me, and cried “ Apollo ! ”
 ‘ O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
 ‘ Those pains of mine ; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
 ‘ Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
 ‘ Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard.’

So far her voice flow’d on, like timorous brook 300
 That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
 Doth fear to meet the sea : but sea it met,
 And shudder’d ; for the overwhelming voice
 Of huge Enceladus swallow’d it in wrath :
 The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
 In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
 Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
 He lean’d ; not rising, from supreme contempt.
 ‘ Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
 ‘ Or to the over-foolish, Giant-Gods ? 310
 ‘ Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
 ‘ That rebel Jove’s whole armoury were spent,
 ‘ Not world on world upon these shoulders piled,
 ‘ Could agonize me more than baby-words
 ‘ In midst of this dethronement horrible.
 ‘ Speak ! roar ! shout ! yell ! ye sleepy Titans all.
 ‘ Do ye forget the blows, the buffets vile ?
 ‘ Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm ?
 ‘ Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
 ‘ Thy scalding in the seas ? What, have I rous’d 320
 ‘ Your spleens with so few simple words as these ?
 ‘ O joy ! for now I see ye are not lost :
 ‘ O joy ! for now I see a thousand eyes
 ‘ Wide-glaring for revenge ! ’—As this he said,

He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus :
' Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
' And purge the ether of our enemies ;
' How to feed fierce the crooked strings of fire,
' And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove, 330
' Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
' O let him feel the evil he hath done ;
' For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,
' Much pain have I for more than loss of realms :
' The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled ;
' Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
' When all the fair Existences of heaven
' Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak :—
' That was before our brows were taught to frown,
' Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds ; 340
' That was before we knew the winged thing,
' Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
' And be ye mindful that Hyperion,
' Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
' Hyperion, lo ! his radiance is here ! '

All eyes were on Enceladus's face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern :
Not savage, for he saw full many a God 350
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendor in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.

In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old, 360
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams :
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion :—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself. 370
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East :
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
He utter'd while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day, 380
And many hid their faces from the light :
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood ; and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he towered on his eminence.
There those four shouted forth old Saturn's name,

Hyperion from the peak loud answered, ' Saturn ! '
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods 390
Gave from their hollow throats the name of ' Saturn ! '

HYPERION. BOOK III

THUS in alternate uproar and sad peace,
Amazed were those Titans utterly.
O leave them, Muse ! O leave them to their woes ;
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire :
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief.
Leave them, O Muse ! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores. 10
Meantime touch piously the Delphic harp,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute ;
For lo ! 'tis for the Father of all verse.
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and of morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills ;
Let the red wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well ; let faint-lipp'd shells, 20
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths ; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surprised.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,

And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade :
Apollo is once more the golden theme !

Where was he, when the Giant of the Sun
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers ? 30

Together had he left his mother fair
And his twin-sister sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lillies of the vale.

The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. Throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave

Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves, 40
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess.
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held.

Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood,
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step an awful Goddess came,
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said :

' How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea ? 50

' Or hath that antique mien and robed form

' Mov'd in these vales invisible till now ?

' Sure I have heard those vestments sweeping o'er

' The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone

' In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced

' The rustle of those ample skirts about

‘ These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
‘ Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass’d.
‘ Goddess ! I have beheld those eyes before,
‘ And their eternal calm, and all that face, 60
‘ Or I have dream’d.’—‘ Yes,’ said the supreme shape,
‘ Thou hast dream’d of me ; and awaking up
‘ Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
‘ Whose strings touch’d by thy fingers, all the vast
‘ Unwearied ear of the whole universe
‘ Listen’d in pain and pleasure at the birth
‘ Of such new tuneful wonder. Is’t not strange
‘ That thou shouldst weep, so gifted ? Tell me, youth,
‘ What sorrow thou canst feel ; for I am sad
‘ When thou dost shed a tear : explain thy griefs 70
‘ To one who in this lonely isle hath been
‘ The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
‘ From the young day when first thy infant hand
‘ Pluck’d witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
‘ Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
‘ Show thy heart’s secret to an ancient Power
‘ Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
‘ For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
‘ Of loveliness new born.’—Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes, 80
Thus answer’d, while his white melodious throat
Throbb’d with the syllables.—‘ Mnemosyne !
‘ Thy name is on my tongue, I know not how ;
‘ Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest ?
‘ Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
‘ Would come no mystery ? For me, dark, dark,
‘ And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes :
‘ I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,

- ' Until a melancholy numbs my limbs ;
 ' And then upon the grass I sit, and moan, 90
 ' Like one who once had wings.—O why should I
 ' Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air
 ' Yields to my step aspirant ? why should I
 ' Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet ?
 ' Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing :
 ' Are there not other regions than this isle ?
 ' What are the stars ? There is the sun, the sun !
 ' And the most patient brilliance of the moon !
 ' And stars by thousands ! Point me out the way
 ' To any one particular beauteous star, 100
 ' And I will flit into it with my lyre,
 ' And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
 ' I have heard the cloudy thunder : Where is power ?
 ' Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
 ' Makes this alarum in the elements,
 ' While I here idle listen on the shores
 ' In fearless yet in aching ignorance ?
 ' O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
 ' That waileth every morn and eventide,
 ' Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves ! 110
 ' Mute thou remainest—mute ! yet I can read
 ' A wondrous lesson in thy silent face :
 ' Knowledge enormous makes a God of me.
 ' Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions
 ' Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,
 ' Creations and destroyings, all at once
 ' Pour into the wide hollows of my brain, .
 ' And deify me, as if some blithe wine
 ' Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
 ' And so become immortal.'—Thus the God, 120

While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
 Beneath his white soft temples, steadfast kept
 Tumbling with light upon Mnemosyne.
 Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
 All the immortal fairness of his limbs ;
 Most like the struggle at the gate of death ;
 Or liker still to one who should take leave
 Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
 As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
 Die into life : so young Apollo anguish'd : 130
 His very hair, his golden tresses famed
 Kept undulation round his eager neck.
 During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
 Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
 Apollo shriek'd ;—and lo ! from all his limbs
 Celestial * * * * *
 * * * * *

THE END

NOTES

- P. 1, ll. 1-3. In these lines, the first of *Endymion*, is the germ of the *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.
- l. 18. **brake** : thicket.
- P. 2. **Hymn to Pan**. Pan was the special patron of shepherds and huntsmen. He was the chief of the rural deities.
- l. 5. **hamadryad** : a nymph inhabiting a tree.
- l. 12. **Syrinx** was a nymph beloved by Pan. She fled from him in terror at his wild appearance.
- P. 3, l. 16. **turtles** : turtle doves.
- l. 21. **foredoom** is used rather loosely for *dedicate*.
- l. 32. **fauns and satyrs** were both rural deities.
- l. 41. **Naiads** were water-nymphs.
- P. 4, l. 51. **routing**, uprooting.
- l. 54. **ministrant**, one who supplies or commands.
- l. 75. **Mount Lycean** : Lycaeus was a mountain in Arcadia where Pan was worshipped.
- P. 5. **The Song of the Indian Maiden** anticipates the Odes in richness of imagery and in some of its metrical features. Its half-barbaric passion is peculiar to itself. It is generally thought that this Bacchanalian song was in part suggested to Keats by Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, now in the National Gallery. Certain details, however, such as the march of the tiger and leopard mingled with Asian elephants (ll. 61, 62), recall the reliefs on various sarcophagi.
- P. 6, l. 29. **ivy-dart** : a wand tipped with ivy. It was called a 'thyrsus' : Bacchus is commonly represented as carrying one.
- l. 34. **Silenus** : son of Pan, and guardian of Bacchus, whose revels he often accompanied.

- P. 7, l. 76. **Osirian Egypt** : Egypt, where Osiris, god of the Nile, is worshipped.
- l. 81. **Tartary**, the home of Turks, Cossacks, and other savage peoples.
- l. 82. **vail** : lower.
- l. 84. **Brahma** : the Hindu deity.
- P. 8. **Sonnet I.** Written in October, 1816, and published in Keats's first volume. A copy of Chapman's translations of Homer had been lent to Cowden Clarke, who read some of the finest passages with Keats. The sonnet was written in the early hours of an October morning, in the heat of the young poet's enthusiasm at his discovery of a new world.
- l. 1. **realms of gold** : our older poetry, which Keats had begun to explore.
- l. 4. **in fealty to Apollo** : in feudal obedience to Apollo.
- l. 6. **demesne** : domain.
- l. 8. **Chapman**, George (1559 ?-1634 ?), was an Elizabethan poet and dramatist. He translated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
- l. 11. **Cortez**, Hernando (1485-1547) : the Spanish Conqueror of Mexico.
- Sonnet II.** Written in January, 1818.
- l. 9. **Fair . . . hour** : Keats alludes to a 'beauty seen but not even accosted three-and-a-half years earlier in the public gardens at Vauxhall.' (Colvin.) That a chance memory should be enshrined in lines so significant may seem strange; yet many parallels might be found in all forms of imaginative creation.
- P. 9. **Sonnet III.** 'Written in the last week of February, 1819, and the first days of Keats's engagement to Fanny Brawne.' (Colvin.)
- l. 4. **Eremit** : an old form of the word 'hermit.'
- ll. 5-6 are quoted by Matthew Arnold as having that 'accent' which is the touchstone of great poetry.
- P. 10. **Fancy**. First appeared in the volume of 1820, but was written a good deal earlier. It is one of Keats's lighter poems, and has something of the Elizabethan manner. The metre is a favourite one with late Elizabethan and Caroline poets, e.g. Ben Jonson and Fletcher. The power of Imagination or Fancy to create its own world is a favourite theme with 'romantic' writers. Cf. Wordsworth's *Yarrow Unvisited*.
- l. 21. **shoon** : archaic for *shoes*.

- P. 12, ll. 81-2. **Ceres' daughter** was Proserpine. As she wandered in the fields of Enna in Sicily she was carried off by Pluto (or Dis) to Hades.
1. 85. **Hebe**, daughter of Juno, was Jupiter's cup-bearer. She was afterwards replaced by Ganymede.
- P. 13. **Ode**. The poem is addressed to the brotherhood of poets who frequented the Mermaid Tavern. (See T. Watts-Dunton's 'Wassail Chorus at the Mermaid Tavern' in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*.)
1. 8. **parle** : speech.
1. 12. **Dian** : Diana, goddess of chastity and hunting.
- P. 14. **Stanzas**. The pleasing and rather unusual metro of this poem was suggested by a song in Dryden's play, *The Spanish Friar* : 'Farewell, ungrateful traitor.'
- P. 15. **The Eve of St. Mark** : St. Mark's Eve is April 24th. All persons destined to die during the coming year could be seen, so the legend said, entering the church porch at midnight on that day.
- P. 16, l. 33. It was Aaron who wore the breastplate, not Moses.
1. 38. **golden mice** : See 1 Samuel vi. 5.
- P. 18, l. 80. **birds of paradise** were believed to have neither wings nor feet, and to rest by hanging from branches by the feathers of their tails.
1. 81. **Macaw** : a kind of parrot.
1. 81. **Avadavat** : 'An Indian song-bird, brown in colour with white spots.' (*N.E.D.*)
1. 99. **Als** : also.
1. 99. **swevenis** : dreams.
1. 100. **han** : have.
1. 101. **hir, hem** : their, them.
- P. 19, l. 103. **mote** : may.
1. 104. **er** : ere.
1. 105. **Gif that** : if.
1. 112. **Somdel** : somewhat.
- P. 19. **Ode to Psyche**. The myth of Psyche was of late Greek origin (cf. ll. 24-5). Psyche was one of three princesses and was so beautiful that Aphrodite herself was jealous, and none dared to seek her hand. The gods took her into their protection, and she became the bride of Eros or Cupid. Psyche had been forbidden to look on her husband's form, but curiosity overcame her, and, in the middle of the night

she silently approached his bed, bearing a lamp in her hand. Her surprise at his beauty was so great that the lamp she carried was shaken, and a drop of burning oil fell on the god's shoulder. After sadly reproaching her Eros spread his wings and flew away. Only by performing a number of almost impossible tasks was Psyche able to win her husband back again.

P. 19, l. 4. **soft-conched** : Like a shell in form and colour.

P. 20, l. 11. **Trembled** : the passive use of intransitive verbs is a feature of Keats's style. The licence is almost invariably justified by its felicity.

ll. 13-14. **'Mid hush'd . . . Tyrian**. By a use of language which cannot be analysed Keats conveys the very essence of woodland flowers. He does not merely paint a picture for the 'inward eye.' He makes us see, smell and feel the flowers as if in very truth; and having charmed the senses, he delights the imagination by indicating the blueness of the flowers in a word of exquisite sound and association.

l. 25. **hierarchy** : the ruling order of gods.

l. 26. **Phoebe's . . . star** : the moon. (Phoebe = Diana).

l. 27. **Vesper** : the evening star.

ll. 28 *et seqq.* Psyche, a late-born goddess, was never worshipped with the honours accorded to the other deities.

P. 21, l. 41. **lucent fans** : luminous wings.

l. 55. 'Keats (as is his way) puts nearly all that may be said of the pine into one verse, though they are only figurative pines of which he is speaking.' Ruskin, *Modern Painters*.

P. 22. **Ode to a Nightingale**. Written in May, 1819, in the garden of Charles Brown's house, Wentworth Place, Hampstead. The neighbourhood has not lost all its charin, and every spring the Heath clothes itself in the verdure which Keats celebrates in immortal verse. But the nightingale sings no longer.

Notice the structure of the stanza, which is of Keats's own invention. One feature is the presence of a six-syllabled iambic line in a group of ten-syllabled lines. Keats had already employed this device, following Spenser and Milton in some of their lyrical poems. The other feature is the rhyme scheme of the last six lines: *abc, abc*. The arrangement is not uncommon in the 'sestet' of sonnets, but is rare in other forms of lyrical verse. Compare the stanza of this Ode with those of the other Odes.

P. 22, l. 14. **Provençal song.** Provence was the birthplace of the mediaeval lyric. The poets were called Troubadours.

l. 16. **Hippocrene :** one of the springs of Helicon, the mountain sacred to the Muses.

P. 23, l. 46. **eglantine :** sweet-briar.

P. 25. **Ode on a Grecian Urn.** This Ode is the complete expression of the idea which was in Keats's mind when he wrote 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' The Ode is composed of several elements, all of which had long been pondered by the poet. His love of Greek art, his sense of the proximity of pain and pleasure, of the contrast between the turbulence of the passions and the severity of the ideal, of the charm of the old Pagan worship—all are blended here. By intense meditation on a thing of beauty Keats rises to the inspired affirmation of the last two lines.

l. 7. **Tempe :** a beautiful valley in Thessaly.

Arcady : Arcadia, actually in the Peloponnese, generally stands in imaginative literature for an ideal land of pastoral simplicity.

P. 26, l. 41. **Attic :** equivalent here to Greek.
brede : embroidery.

l. 45. **Pastoral :** The word, which is generally applied to poems and romances dealing with shepherd-life, is here given to the urn.

P. 27. **To Autumn.** 'How beautiful the season is now; how fine the air—a temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather—Dian skies. I never liked stubble fields so much as now—aye, better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow, a stubble plain looks warm, in the same way that some pictures look warm. This struck me so much in my Sunday's walk that I composed upon it.' Keats, in a letter from Winchester to John Hamilton Reynolds. What he composed is the Ode *To Autumn*.

l. 7. **gourd :** a large fruit.

l. 11. **clammy :** sticky.

ll. 12-22. The perfection and naturalness of this stanza show how deep was Keats's affinity with the mythological imagination of the Greeks. A lovelier personification does not exist in poetry. (Did Keats conceive Autumn as a male or as a female figure? 'Hair soft-lifted' is not conclusive in favour of a woman.)

P. 27, l. 18. **swath**. 'Ridge of grass, corn, etc., lying after being cut' (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*).

P. 28, l. 28. **sallows** : willows.

— **La Belle Dame Sans Merci**. The title (see also *The Eve of St. Agnes*, i. 292), is taken from a poem by an old French writer, Alain Chartier : Keats knew the work in translation. *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* was copied out by Keats in a letter to his brother and sister-in-law, George and Georgiana. It also appeared in *The Indicator*, in May, 1820. The two versions are different in several respects : e.g. *The Indicator* has 'wretched wight' for 'knight-at-arms,' it transposes Stanzas V. and VI., it alters Stanza VIII. considerably, and for l. 33, it has 'And there we slumbered on the moss.' The earlier version is certainly the better : and although Keats was alive when the poem appeared in *The Indicator*, the changes were made when he was too ill to exercise the finest judgment.

ISABELLA.

The story is in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, a collection of a hundred stories in fourteenth century Italian prose (4th Day : Novella Quinta). In the original version the story is a mere skeleton : all the poetry—in spite of Keats's modest disclaimer—is his own.

The stanza is of Italian origin and is called *ottava rima*. It is a favourite with Byron and lends itself to his brilliant satire. Keats is equally successful in adapting the music of the stanza to the changing moods of his poem.

P. 31, l. 2. **Palmer . . . eye** : A pilgrim under the observation and guidance of Love.

ll. 5-6. These lines suggested a typical pre-Raphaelite painting by Millais. The work is in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

Pp. 31-32, ll. 2-21. **palmer, falcon, vespers** : These words unobtrusively draw the reader's imagination to the Middle Ages.

P. 32, l. 34. **Within . . . domain** : Where the rose might have been expected to rule.

l. 39. 'If I may judge her heart from her expression my words will put an end to her trouble.'

l. 46. Exaggerated his high conception of such a bride.

P. 33, ll. 51-2. 'If I had not been able to read his thoughts from his looks.'

l. 62. **fear** : frighten, as often in Shakespeare.

l. 64. **shrive** : confess.

P. 34, l. 91. **in fee** : in payment, *i.e.* out of sympathy.

l. 95. **Theseus** : who was beloved by Ariadne, left her abandoned on the Isle of Naxos.

l. 99. **Dido**, forsaken by Aeneas at Carthage, turns away from him when he meets her in Hades, and flees 'in nemus umbriferum' to be comforted by her former husband. *Aen.* VI. 459-476.

P. 35; ll. 102-1. **Though . . . embalm'd** : This strained simile seems to be due to the difficulty of finding a rhyme to 'grove.'

l. 103. The honey gathered by the bees is the 'alms' they win from the flowers.

l. 107. **swelt** : toil in heat.

l. 109. **proud-quiver'd** : probably means 'proudly girt with a quiver.'

l. 124. **lazar stairs** : the stairs of the poor and diseased, from the name of Lazarus, the beggar in St. Luke's Gospel.

l. 128. The bathos of this line is another instance of the poet's immaturity.

P. 36, l. 132. **vineyarded** : is very characteristic of Keats's pictorial imagination. 'The whole stanza expresses in a series of far-fetched (in the best sense) similes, the inmost essence of unscrupulous self-regarding commercialism, the very heart of "ledger-men." The poet compares the two Florentines to Jews; the image of Jews suggests the image of the Bible; and then comes the image of the vineyard—one of the chief forms of wealth familiar to Bible-characters and Bible-readers. And so he is not content with imagining the Florentines as Jews; anybody might do that. He sees them and their riches as a vineyard, fenced not only against theft but vision; and what he sees he conveys suggestively in one word.' D. W. Rannie.

l. 133. They had a hawk-like instinct for prey : harbours were their haunts.

P. 36, l. 134. They were as long-suffering as mules if money might be gained. They would endure anything in the service of profitable dishonesty. 'Old lies' suggests that they would 'commit the oldest sins the newest kinds of ways.'

l. 135. They pounced on the unsuspecting stranger with the treachery of a cat.

- P. 36, l. 150. **ghittern** : guitar, the stringed instrument which accompanies 'the simple plaining of a minstrel's song,' l. 388.
- P. 37, l. 155. **no mad assail** : no wild attack on the impossible.
- l. 159. **To stead thee** : to do thee a service.
- l. 168. Olive trees are much cultivated near Florence, hence they naturally suggest wealth.
- l. 174. **Cut mercy . . . bone** : An anticipation of the actual murder of Lorenzo.
- P. 38, l. 188. A beautiful metaphor, though, as Ruskin remarks, it does not give 'the heart of the thing, the solemnity of prayer.' The poet has only noticed an external likeness, having seized on the outside resemblances of bead form, and on the slipping from their threading bough one by one.' Is the metaphor appropriate in the mouths of the two brothers ?
- l. 195. **matin-song** : more beautiful here than 'morning song.' A good instance of legitimate poetic diction.
- Pp. 38-9, ll. 207-9. Nearly all critics have remarked upon the wonderful contrast between the last two lines of Stanza XXVI. and the first line of Stanza XXVII., with its bold, anticipatory epithet 'murdered.'
- P. 39, l. 212. **bream** : a fresh-water fish.
- l. 213. **freshets** : currents of water.
- ll. 220-1. The soul of a murdered man, says Keats, following an old superstition, is as restless as the bloodhounds sent to track down a murderer.
- P. 40, l. 252. **roundelay** : dirge.
- P. 41, l. 262. **Hinnom's vale** was just outside Jerusalem. Sacrifices were offered there to Moloch. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, i. 392-405.
- l. 279. **loamed** : smeared with loam or clay.
- P. 42, l. 292. **woof** : used somewhat loosely as a synonym for web.
- P. 43, l. 317. **the bright abyss** : Heaven.
- ll. 321-25. A description of what has been often experienced but seldom described, viz. : the illusion, to which strained or anxious eyes are liable, of specks or motes which are vaguely visible in the darkness.
- P. 44, l. 349. **betide** : be your portion.
- ll. 354 *et seqq.* Of these stanzas, which are probably the finest in the poem, Lamb, in a review, published a

fortnight after the appearance of the 1820 volume, wrote: 'There is nothing more awfully simple in diction, more nakedly grand and moving in sentiment, in Dante, in Chaucer or in Spenser.' Note how the details of the description relieve the horror of Isabella's digging, without weakening its drama.

P. 45, l. 370. play'd . . . phantasies : fancifully embroidered.

ll. 371-2. Sir S. Colvin well remarks on Isabella's womanly action in kissing the glove 'and putting it in her bosom, while all the woman and mother in her is in the same words revealed to us as blighted by the tragedy of her life.'

l. 384. Another line to remind us in the midst of high poetry that Keats's touch is still uncertain.

l. 385. wormy circumstance : gruesome detail.

l. 388. plaining : mourning, complaining.

l. 393. Perséan sword : the sword with which Perseus cut off Medusa's head.

P. 46, l. 398. impersonate : personified.

l. 412. serpent-pipe : curved pipe.

l. 416. Basil : an aromatic herb.

P. 47, l. 432. leafit : an old form of 'leaflet.'

l. 442. Melpomene : the muse of Tragedy.

P. 48, l. 451. Baälites of pelf : idolaters of money.

ll. 469-72. Cf. note on ll. 371-2.

l. 475. The one glimpse of horror allowed to be seen amid the beauty of the poem.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

The legend around which this poem is woven is told briefly in Stanza VI. St. Agnes, a Christian child of the fourth century, refused to marry a Pagan and died a martyr. In pictures she is represented with lambs; hence the allusion in l. 71; and in her honour nuns wove the wool out of which the archbishop's cloak was made (ll. 115-7).

The stanza is the Spenserian. Soon after reading *The Faerie Queen* Keats wrote four stanzas 'In Imitation of Spenser.' The difference between these tentative lines and the mastery of the stanza as used in *The Eve of St. Agnes* shows a marvellous advance in poetic art.

P. 50, ll. 1-9. Notice how every detail in this perfect opening stanza contributes to the impression of intense cold.

- P. 50, l. 5. **Beadsman** : One who receives alms to pray for a benefactor.
- l. 12. **meagre, barefoot, wan.** A great poet can be known by the expressiveness of his epithets. Keats is fond of using them in groups of three.
- l. 15. **purgatorial rails.** The freezing atmosphere of the chapel suggests that the dead are undergoing a purgatory of cold.
- l. 16. **dumb** : silent, by a natural transference of meaning : cf. Latin *caecus*, meaning *dark*.
- P. 51, ll. 28-30. The Beadsman remained in the chapel, but heard the music from the hall in the gallery of which were the musicians 'up aloft.'
- l. 32. **level** : The word invites the imagination to picture long, uninterrupted spaces.
- l. 37. **argent** : silver. Notice how many times the adjective 'silver' is used in this poem, often in conspicuous places.
- P. 52, l. 70. **Hoodwink'd . . . fancy.** The light of inward fancy blinds Madeline to outward things.
- l. 70. **amort** : dead to everything except . . .
- P. 53, l. 77. **Buttress'd** : The unusual word is justified by the picture it suggests of architecture in moonlight.
- P. 54, l. 120. Holding water in a sieve was one of the miracles commonly practised by witches.
- l. 126. **mickle** : an old word for 'much.' Words of this kind, easy to understand, but with a flavour of antiquity about them, had been becoming common in the more 'romantic' poets, especially since the publication of Percy's *Reliques* in 1765. Cf. Chatterton's *Rowley Poems*, Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*, etc.
- P. 55, l. 134. **brook** means *endure*. Keats wrongly uses the word in the sense of *check*.
- P. 56, l. 156. **passing-bell** : knell.
- l. 158. **plaining** : complaining.
- l. 171. 'Referring to the old legend that Merlin had for father an incubus or demon, and was himself a demon of evil, though his innate wickedness was driven out by baptism. Thus his debt to the demon was his existence, which he paid when Vivien compassed his destruction by means of a spell which he had taught her. Keats refers to the storm which is said to have raged that night, which Tennyson also describes in *Merlin and Vivien*.' (M. Robertson.)

- P. 56, l. 173-5. It is not quite clear whether Angela or Porphyro himself conceived the idea of waking Isabella from her enchanted dreams to partake of 'cakes and dainties.' One may feel certain that the musical awakening at least was suggested by the lover.

the tambour frame : embroidering frame.

- P. 57, l. 188. **amain** merely intensifies the word which it follows.

l. 193. **mission'd** : dedicated to some high service.

l. 198. Madeline hastens to her chamber with the eagerness with which a ring-dove, terrified and fugitive, returns to its nest.

- P. 58, l. 218. **gules** : blood-red marks on a coat of arms.

- P. 59, l. 247. **To . . . tenderness** : to pass into the tenderness of sleep.

l. 257. **Morphean amulet** : a charm to induce or continue sleep.

- P. 60, l. 266. **soother**. Keats uses the word incorrectly, in a sense roughly equivalent to 'smoother.' No doubt this word was partly suggested by 'soothed' in l. 238.

l. 277. **hermit** : cf. the note on l. 4 of the Sonnet on p. 9.

l. 288. **woofed** : complicated, confused. Cf. p. 42, l. 292.

- P. 61, 309-316. Note the contrast between the 'spiritual' and 'immortal' aspect of Porphyro in the dream with his 'pallid, chill and drear' aspect in reality.

- P. 62, l. 323. The noise of the sleet against the window panes was like an alarm by Love urging them to be gone.

l. 333. **unpruned**. Untrimmed, not prepared for flying.

ll. 337-339. Cf. **Isabella**, l. 2 : 'Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye.'

- P. 63, l. 349. **mead** : a sweet drink.

l. 355. **darkling** : cf. note on the *Ode to a Nightingale*, l. 51.

- P. 64, ll. 372-381. The last lines emphasize the happiness of Porphyro and Madeline by contrast. Madeline's dreams have been blissful : the Baron and his guests are tormented by nightmares. The two lovers have a life of joy before them : Angela and the Beadsman, a dreary old age, ending in death and oblivion.

HYPERION.

Hyperion was to have consisted of four books. Keats abandoned the poem because, in his own phrase, it was too 'Miltonic.' This criticism has a deep significance and extends beyond matters of style. Sometimes Keats regarded Milton as a model, at others he strove to escape from his spell. The abandonment of *Hyperion* was due to Keats's desire for a more intimate kind of poetry than Milton's—for one which is less remote from actual life. But the more obvious meaning of 'Miltonic' as applied to *Hyperion* is also important, for the poem has many features, both of treatment and language, which recall *Paradise Lost*.

Though a fragment, *Hyperion* is one of Keats's greatest poems, and though 'Miltonic' it is one of his most original. It is an epic on the overthrow of the Titans by the Olympians. The Titans, with whom Keats also ranks the Giants, were an ancient dynasty of gods, presiding over the powers of Nature and ruled by Saturn. Knowing that his power would, one day, be overthrown by his son, Saturn had tried to destroy all his children. But Jupiter, the youngest, had escaped, and, in the fulness of time, overcame Saturn in a tremendous struggle. The poem opens with a description of Saturn after his defeat as he sits despairing in a lonely valley. After a dialogue between Saturn and Thea, the wife of Hyperion, the narrative passes on to Hyperion himself, the sun-god, who, alone among the Saturnians, has escaped defeat. But though still unconquered he is disturbed by many premonitions of impending evil. Book I. ends with his journey to the 'den' where his fellow-gods lie in defeat. Book II. opens with a description of the conquered deities, who are roused out of their passive gloom by the sudden appearance of Saturn. Like the followers of Satan in *Paradise Lost* the gods begin a debate on their condition (though the time seems to call for suffering rather than deeds). The finest—it is also the central—speech of the poem, is made by Oceanus, who counsels philosophic resignation. The older gods, he urges, must give place to their supplanters, who surpass them in beauty,

and must reign

In right thereof ; for, 'tis the eternal law.

That first in beauty should be first, in might.

The debate is interrupted by the appearance of Hyperion ; but his dejected air soon extinguishes the hope which had begun to dawn. Book III. opens in Delos, an island in the Cyclades especially associated with Apollo. The short but beautiful dialogue between Mnemosyne, mother of the Muses, and Apollo, patron of all the arts, introduces the painful struggle which transforms Apollo into a god. At this point the poem breaks off, but the remainder would obviously have shown how Hyperion was

superseded by Apollo. The story was partially re-handled by Keats in another fragment, *The Fall of Hyperion*.

P. 65, l. 18. The first of several descriptions which suggest a sculptural image (cf. i. 86-88; ii. 33-38, etc.).

l. 21. **His ancient mother** was actually the Earth, or Tellus (cf. i. 246).

P. 66, l. 30. **Ixion** was bound to an ever-revolving wheel in Hell, in punishment for an insult to Juno, the wife of Jupiter.

l. 31. **Memphian sphinx**. Memphis was a town in Egypt (cf. "Memphian chivalry" in *Paradise Lost* for "Egyptian horsemen").

P. 67, l. 74. Keats's use of such words as *earnest* and *patient*, as applied to stars, etc., shows his genius for myth-making in one of its simplest though one of its most impressive forms.

P. 68, l. 94. **aspen-malady**: the aspen poplar quivers at the least breath of air.

l. 105. **nervous** means here 'nervy' or 'sinewy,' cf. 'nervous style.'

l. 107 *et seqq.* A description of the Golden Age, which was also the age of Saturn.

P. 69, l. 129. **metropolitan**: belonging to the chief city.

l. 147. **The rebel three**: Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto.

P. 70, ll. 172-3. The return of a dead man as soon as his knell begins to toll.

l. 177. **Bastion'd**: fortified. A 'bastion' is a projecting part of a fortification.

P. 71, l. 181. Hyperion's greatest glory was at the dawn (or sunset). Hence his palace is curtained with clouds flushed by Aurorian lights. (Aurora = dawn).

P. 72, l. 216. **Hours**: daughters of Jupiter and Themis, who presided over the changes of the Seasons.

l. 228. **effigies of pain**: visions of pain.

Pp. 73-4, ll. 269-80. **The planet orb of fire** is the subject of 'glow'd through,' and the object is 'The glancing spheres . . . colure.' The meaning of the whole passage is that the sun darted forth rays of light from the lowest point (nadir) of the heavens to the highest (zenith). (The 'colure' is one of the two great circles supposed to intersect at right angles at the poles.) These sweet-shaped lightnings resembled hieroglyphics which sages and astrologers obtained from the contemplation of many centuries.

P. 75, l. 307. **Coelus** is the Latin form of Uranus. From the marriage of Oceanus and Gaea, *i.e.*, Heaven and Earth, sprang Giants and Gods.

l. 326. **vox** : waxed, grew.

P. 76, ll. 344-5. Prevent the arrow's flight before the sound of the drawn string gives warning that an arrow is to be shot.

BOOK II.

P. 76, l. 4. **Cybele** : wife of Saturn.

P. 77, l. 9. **uncertain where** : 'It being uncertain where.' A classical construction probably borrowed from Milton.

ll. 19-20 *et seqq.* Some of the names in this Book are of Giants, some of Titans.

ll. 34-8. The comparison of the fallen gods to a Druid circle was probably suggested by the stones near Keswick seen by Keats in his tour to the North.

P. 80, l. 133. **spirit-leaved book** : the sky, source of primeval wisdom. Cf. i. ll. 277-80.

P. 82, l. 168. Oceanus resembled the Greek philosophers in wisdom, but, unlike them, meditated not in a grove, but in watery shades.

ll. 173 *et seqq.* The speech of Oceanus is the heart of the poem ; and it is possible that in the sequel Hyperion was intended to give way to Apollo without resistance, recognising the law that 'first in beauty should be first in might.'

Pp. 82-3, ll. 191-201. Oceanus traces the birth of the Giants from primeval chaos. Each order endures for the appointed time and then gives way to one which is higher : 'Ripeness is all.'

P. 83, l. 208. **show** : appear. A common Elizabethan usage.

P. 86, l. 306. **half-glutted** : half-filled by the incoming tide.

P. 87, l. 328. **purge** : purify, or (as Enceladus really means), 'scorch' the serene Olympian air enjoyed by our enemies.

ll. 341-2. **The winged thing, Victory** : Keats is no doubt thinking of the winged Nikē (Victory) of Greek sculpture.

P. 88, l. 371. **Numidian** : the epithet is meant to suggest the short curly hair of the Africans.

ll. 374-6. **Memnon** : led auxiliary forces from Egypt to fight for Troy in the Trojan war. He was killed, and in his memory the Egyptians raised a statue, which gave forth a musical sound as soon as the rays of dawn struck it.

Book III.

- P. 89, l. 10. **Delphic harp**: Delphi was especially sacred to Apollo, who is now about to enter the poem.
- l. 12. **Dorian flute**: Dorian music was manly and war-like. The epithet does not seem particularly appropriate here.
- l. 13. **The Father . . . verse**: Apollo.
- l. 23. **Cyclades**: Aegean Islands which surrounded Delos.
- l. 24. **Delos**: the whole island was consecrated to Apollo.
- P. 90, ll. 30-1. Apollo's mother was Latona; his sister, Diana.
- P. 91, l. 82. **Mnemosyne**: the Mother of the Muses. Her name signifies 'Memory.'
- P. 92, ll. 92-3. **the liegeless air . . . aspirant**: The *liegeless*, or independent, air gives way beneath Apollo's ascending foot.
- P. 93, l. 136. Keats's friend Woodhouse completed the last line with the words: 'Glory dawn'd, he was a god.'

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS.

- ✓ 1. "With a puling infant's force,
They sway'd about upon a rocking horse,
And thought it Pegasus."

In these words Keats describes the manner in which Pope, Johnson and other poets of the eighteenth century handled the heroic couplet. How does his own treatment of this metre differ from theirs?

2. "L'épithète rare, voilà la marque du poète." Write an essay on Keats's poetic use of rare epithets.

3. Distinguish between the right and the wrong use of Personification in poetry, with special reference to the art of Keats.

4. Distinguish between the right and the wrong use of Classical Mythology in poetry, with special reference to the art of Keats.

5. *The Eve of St. Mark* was especially admired by Rossetti and William Morris. What relation is there between the work of Keats and that of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood?

6. Which of the four odes on pp. 19-28 do you think the finest? Give reasons.

7. Of *Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and *Lamia*, Sir Sidney Colvin says: "To my mind the finest of these is *Isabella*." Mr. Middleton Murry says, "Surely *Isabella* is the least of the three in true poetic power."

What are your own views as to the respective merits of *Isabella* and *The Eve of St. Agnes*?

8. Compare the Second Book of *Hyperion* with the Second Book of *Paradise Lost*.

9. Write a short essay on the passages in *Hyperion* which are suggestive of sculpture.

10. Does it appear that Keats's imitation of Milton in *Hyperion* was cramping his own originality?

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY.

1. Keats's *Letters to his Family and Friends*, ed. Sir Sidney Colvin (Macmillan). These letters give an intimate account of Keats's thoughts and aspirations, personal and literary. Keats was one of the great letter-writers in English. (A fuller collection of the Letters is in vols. iv. and v. of Keats's Works, edited by J. Buxton Forman, published by Gowans & Gray, Glasgow.)

2. *Keats*, by Sir Sidney Colvin in the *English Men of Letters Series* (Macmillan). A short biography by the chief authority on Keats's life.

3. *Life of John Keats*, by Sir Sidney Colvin (Macmillan). A book on Keats's "Life and Poetry, his Friends, Critics and After-Fame." The fullest account of the poet's life and work.

4. *The Letters of Keats*, in A. C. Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (Macmillan). A most valuable lecture for those who already know the poet's work.

5. *Keats*, ed. W. T. Arnold (Macmillan's Globe Library). This introduction is valuable for the light it throws on the sources of Keats's vocabulary.

6. *The Poems of John Keats*, edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by E. de Sélincourt (Methuen).

7. *Keats and Shakespeare*, by J. Middleton Murry (Oxford University Press). A study of Keats's inner life. It shows great insight into certain aspects of the poet's work.

8. *Keats's Epithets*, by D. Watson Rannie, in vol. iii. of *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association* (Clarendon Press). An excellent study in the art of expression.

9. *Keats, Poetry and Prose*, edited, with Introduction and Notes, by H. Ellershaw (Clarendon Press). Contains criticisms by Lamb, Leigh Hunt, David Masson, Swinburne, Robert Bridges and others.

10. *Keats*, by H. W. Garrod (Clarendon Press). An interesting study of Keats's art by the Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

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